



GLOBALIZING SOMALIA

Multilateral, International and Transnational
Repercussions of Conflict

Edited by

Emma Leonard and Gilbert Ramsay



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Globalizing Somalia

Multilateral, international, and
transnational repercussions of conflict

EDITED BY

**EMMA LEONARD AND
GILBERT RAMSAY**

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*For Susan and Nigel,
For Dina*

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Acknowledgments

One thing leads to another. Four years ago now, Emma decided to organize a meeting for those who were the staff of and those who were associated with the University of St Andrews' Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV) to try to identify potential research clusters. It wasn't all that obvious what sort of picture would emerge from joining the dots. Research interests around the table included topics ranging from piracy and maritime terrorism to China, Muslim diasporas in the West to the politics of sub-Saharan Africa, from radicalization on the internet to strategic violence after civil wars.

Whether the word "Somalia" came up in that meeting, or in a chance conversation afterwards, it stuck. It grew from a slightly whimsical quip about the one coherent topic that seemed to contain room for such a multitude of research areas into a semi-serious idea for a collaborative book, into an idea for a conference. And then the idea for a conference turned into a call for papers and, then, before we knew it, we had a full-blown two-day conference on our hands: "Globalisations of the Conflict in Somalia," held in grand style in St Andrews' Parliament Hall.

"Globalisations of the Conflict in Somalia" was everything we might have hoped for and more, and the wealth of material we had on our hands once it was over convinced us that there was no turning back now from the original idea to produce a book. Well, after a lot of work, and a lot more tenacity, (I hope it's acceptable at this point to give Emma credit for most of the former, and pretty much all of the latter), here it is.

Given its origins, and the long and sometimes circuitous road it took to get here, it should be no surprise that we also owe this book's existence to a lot of people's patience and good will. The first people we ought to thank, of course, are the authors. Not only did each and every one of them produce outstanding scholarship but they also showed an unbelievable capacity for putting up with our seemingly endless requests for what must at times have felt like niggling little updates and edits to their masterpieces, from the potentially time consuming to the potentially maddening.

Next, we ought to thank our colleagues or former colleagues at St Andrews—some of whom are also contributors to this volume. Deciding who to name specifically is difficult (we hope not dangerous!). But it is impossible to pass

over Professor Max Taylor, then director of the Centre where we both worked, who offered huge amounts of enthusiasm, moral, and material support. Also, of course, all those who, at the time of the project's initiation, staffed the CSTPV—Gillian, Javier, (who shared an office and a lot of jokes with the editors during this project's crucial formative period), Joseph, Julie, Orla, Peter, Rashmi, and, of course, the late and sorely missed Professor Paul Wilkinson: this book is, in many ways, a product of the wonderfully supportive and “can-do” atmosphere that all of you have helped to create. Thanks also to Mark Currie and to the CSTPV's new, and equally enthusiastic and supportive director, Professor Richard English.

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G.A.W.R

In addition to all of the acknowledgments Gilbert made on behalf of both of us above, I must add a few of my own. In the middle of this project I moved from CSTPV to the Political Science department at The Pennsylvania State University to begin my graduate studies, which undoubtedly lengthened the timeline of this project. I'd like to add my own thanks to the authors, to Gilbert, and our editors for not complaining about the delay and for their best wishes as I started this new chapter in my life.

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E.J.L

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Abbreviations

ACP	Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific countries
AIAI	al-Ittihad al-Islami
AMIS	African Union Mission in Sudan
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
APF	African Peace Facility
ARPCT	Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism
ARS	Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia
ASWJ	Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa
ATA	Anti-Terrorist Alliance
AU	African Union
CJTF-HOA	Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa
CNOOC	Chinese National Off-shore Oil Corporation
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
CTF	Combined Task Force
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EACTI	East African Counterterrorism Initiative
EDF	European Development Fund
EEZ	exclusive economic zone
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ELF	Eritrean Liberation Front
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front

EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Democratic Front
EU	European Union
EUTM	EU Training Mission
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
FOA	Fisheries Partnership Agreement
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IEDs	improvised explosive devices
IfS	Instrument for Stability
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IPE	International Political Economy
IRTC	Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor
IU	Islamic Union
IUU	illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing
JCG	Japan Coast Guard
JMSDF	Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force
JSP	Joint Strategy Paper
LAPSSET	Lamu Port and Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor
LDC	least-developed countries
LME	Large Maritime Ecosystems
LNG	liquefied natural gas
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MLAAR	medium level armed assault and robbery
MOD	Japanese Ministry of Defence
MOFA	Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MSP	Malacca Strait Patrol

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	non-governmental organization
OTP	Ocean Training and Promotion
ONLF	Ogadeen National Liberation Front
PAG	pirate action groups
PBC	UN Peacebuilding Commission
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PSCs	private security companies
RDP	UN and World Bank reconstruction programme for Somalia
ReCAAP	Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia
RRA	Rahanwhein Resistance Army
SDM	Somali Democratic Movement
SHADE	Shared Awareness and Deconfliction conference
SICC	Supreme Islamic Courts Council
SINOPEC	China Petrochemical Corporation
SLOC	Sea Lane of Communication
SNA	Somali National Alliance
SNM	Somali National Movement
SOFA	status of forces agreement
SPM	Somali Patriotic Movement
SRC	Supreme Revolutionary Council
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General
SSDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
SSLF	Somali Salvation and Liberation Front
TFC	Transitional Federal Charter
TFG	Transitional Federal Government

TNG	Transitional National Government
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNITAF	Unified Task Force
UNOSOM I	UN Operation in Somalia I
UNOSOM II	UN Operation in Somalia II
UNSC	UN Security Council
USC	United Somali Congress
WSLF	Western Somali Liberation Front
YCG	Yemeni Coast Guard

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Introduction

*Emma Leonard and Gilbert Ramsay*¹

"It is not easy to speak about Somalia. The very nature of the country, the way of life of its people, and their cultural background, appear to evade objective thought and rational explanation."

THE HON. MOHAMED HAJI IBRAHIM EGAL
Prime Minister of the Somali Republic, March 1968

Somalia today is seen as the quintessential example of a failed state: an entire generation has grown up in the midst of a civil war, the recognized government controls very little territory within the country, and drought has exacerbated the problems of feeding a population that already relies on international food donations. What is particularly noticeable in the popular discourse surrounding the Somali conflict is the pervasive doubt that the conflict will be resolved. If ever there was a conflict that was seen as intractable, it is the conflict in Somalia. And yet, few such strategically peripheral conflicts have received as much attention from world powers and international organizations as this conflict has. Multiple interventions and multiple peace processes have tried and failed to end the conflict, leaving many to argue that the only way to bring it to an end is to stop intervening and let the Somali people deal with the conflict themselves. The relative success of Somaliland has reinforced this view.

The understandable emphasis on the conflict, and the destruction this has caused, has masked a far more complex reality on the ground. As strange as it sounds though, economically Somalia has not fared any worse than its neighbors, and in some aspects has developed further than them. "By the early 2000s, many of Somalia's economic development indicators were actually comparable to or better than those of neighbouring countries."² The export of livestock has increased (with only a few traders reporting

security issues), multinational corporations such as Dole Fruit Inc., DHL, Coca-Cola, and General Motors have invested in or have factories in Somalia,³ and Leeson argues that “on nearly all of 18 key [development] indicators that allow pre- and post-stateless welfare comparisons, Somalis are better off under anarchy than they were under government. Renewed vibrancy in critical sectors of Somalia’s economy and public goods in the absence of a predatory state are responsible for this improvement.”⁴

According to the World Bank data,⁵ the GDP of Somalia in 2000 was US\$2,052 million, far above that of Djibouti (US\$557 million) and Eritrea (US\$706 million). Ethiopia, in comparison, had a GDP of US\$8,111 million in 2000. Over the following decade, the GDP of Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti grew while the GDP of Somalia fell to the point where Somalia had the lowest GDP in the region in 2010. This contraction in Somalia’s GDP though cannot simply be attributed to the lack of government as GDP rose slightly between 2000 (US\$2,052 million) and 2005 (US\$2,316 million). Leeson himself suggests that the improvement in the Somali economy in the early 2000s is due to the interaction between the absence of a predatory state and a period of relative peace in Somalia, when he discusses how the renewal of the conflict in 2006 resurrected the political violence that had until that point been largely under control.⁶ This in itself suggests that two main assumptions within international discourse need to be re-examined: (1) that effective government is essential to economic development and the internal management of conflict; and, if it is, then (2) that a functioning “state” is a pre-requisite for, or an inevitable consequence of, effective government. First, it is clear that the level of conflict in Somalia has not been steady over time, despite that fact that the official government of the state has been almost uniformly unable to govern over the same period. The relative peace in Somalia throughout the early 2000s demonstrates that the country is not necessarily in a state of constant turmoil. This would indicate that actors other than the official government were successfully governing areas of Somalia, a fact that seems to have been ignored in the focus on the formation of first the Transitional National Government (TNG) and then the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Second, the growth of the Somali economy during this period demonstrates that the government is not strictly necessary if growth is measured at a macrolevel, although it seems unlikely that individuals would not have preferred a functioning government to offer protection from rogue businessmen. At a macrolevel one of the main problems caused by the lack of national government is that it is very difficult to engage in international trade, and therefore growth must focus on the internal market. This in turn will only be sustainable while there is relative peace, as conflict will disrupt and then decimate the internal market.

Reconciling the many contradictions within Somalia has proved very difficult. The vast majority of writing on Somalia has focused on discrete aspects of the

conflict, while very few have attempted to demonstrate how these aspects are intertwined. For example, much has been written about piracy,⁷ and the links between Al Shabaab and Al Qaeda.⁸ Many of the books published on Somalia have focused on how to rebuild the state.⁹ What has been missing though is the overarching analysis that brings all the disparate aspects of the conflict together and demonstrates how these aspects fit together. As Ali Jimale Ahmed argues, “Somali affairs still present a conundrum to the totalizing analyses elaborated by area specialists.”¹⁰ This lack of information has notably been reflected in the academic work produced on the conflict over the last 20 years. While there have been book chapters and journal articles covering specific aspects of the conflict, there are few recent books that have tackled the Somali conflict as a whole. While access to conflict zones is always difficult, in other conflicts gaining access has been possible and most conflicts have been the subject of academic work prior to the ending of the conflict. This is true of numerous conflicts within Africa and around the world, such as the Darfur conflict in Sudan,¹¹ the Lord’s Resistance Army conflict in Northern Uganda¹² and within the Democratic Republic of Congo,¹³ and most obviously with the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan¹⁴ and Iraq,¹⁵ neither of which could be described as any less dangerous than Somalia. When access for foreign academics has proved difficult, local academics have often taken up the mantle instead—this is particularly notable in the literature on the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone where there is a striking amount of academic literature produced by local academics.¹⁶ That neither Western nor local researchers have been able to produce comprehensive accounts of the Somali conflict has increased the sense that the conflict is simply incomprehensible.

This book argues that the conflict in Somalia is far from incomprehensible and brings together chapters on many of the ways in which the conflict has become a global issue. As well as chapters on piracy and Al Qaeda’s links in Somalia, there are chapters on the foreign fighters who travel from the West in order to fight for their vision of Somalia, United Nations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) involvement, and traditional peacebuilding mechanisms within Somali society. Other chapters detail the responses of major world and regional powers to this conflict. Disaggregating the conflict and its consequences in such a way allows us to begin to make sense of the conflict and allows the reader to see how the disparate elements of the conflict piece together.

This book, however, goes beyond a historical account of the international aspects of the conflict in Somalia. It demonstrates how forces of globalization can not only affect the internal dynamics of a conflict, but also the de-territorialization of that conflict in unexpected ways. As the far-reaching consequences of piracy and the potential links to international terrorist

organizations become clear, it has become very apparent that the Somali conflict is no longer geographically contained. That the conflict has become transnational in its very nature is central to the argument of this book. We highlight the transnational consequences of the conflict and the multilateral efforts undertaken by a number of states around the world in order to deal with these consequences.

We also argue that one of the main reasons the conflict has spread from Somali territory in the way that it has is because of how Somalia is now viewed within the international system. Few actors within the international system truly *see* Somalia any more. Somalia is simply a zone of anarchy. Because there is no plausible government within Somalia capable of exercising its sovereign right to give or refuse consent to international actors wanting to work within Somalia, many actors within the international system have begun to use it as a “testing ground” in their attempts to project power (China, Japan, and the EU), promote certain interpretations of Islam (Al Qaeda) or new theories of conflict resolution (the United States, United Nations, and NGOs). These two themes carry throughout the book and will be discussed in further detail in the conclusion.

The rest of this introduction presents a brief history of Somalia and then expands and defines the key themes of globalization and sovereignty that appear throughout the book. The introduction will end with a section detailing the outline of the book and a final thought on what Somalia tells us about the current balance of power with the contemporary international system.

Somalia

Pre-colonial Somalia was a mixture of nomadic and settled communities, with the vast majority of the population outside of the coastal towns living a nomadic lifestyle. I. M. Lewis argued that “probably no more than an eighth of the total Somali population are sedentary cultivators, and these mainly the southern Digil and Rahanweyn tribes.”¹⁷ The result of this was that “despite linguistic, religious and cultural homogeneity, there was no collective consciousness in pre-colonial Somalia.”¹⁸ In fact Somali society enshrined the principle of egalitarianism to the point where personal authority “was not based on the capacity to control others, but the capability to ensure others were not controlled.”¹⁹ Leaders were elected but informal councils were responsible for most political and judicial decision making, limiting the powers of the elected leaders. Respected elders were also appointed to oversee implementation of decisions. As such, power was diffused through many aspects of Somali society and not concentrated in any one individual.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Somalia was in turmoil, as the land was threatened from the British in the south (then British East Africa, now Kenya) and the Ethiopians in the north,²⁰ as well as the Italians who had made their own expansionist aims in the region clear. However, due to the clan system and nomadic lifestyles, Somali society was divided and resistance to a foreign invader was ineffectual. "It is clear that Somali resistance to the extension of British administration was undertaken within the traditional framework of their segmentary system, and this made the attainment at widespread cooperation extremely difficult."²¹ Ultimately, this resistance failed and Somalia was colonized.

As European colonization took place in the final quarter of the nineteenth century, "the Somali territory was divided into five parts: the British Somaliland Protectorate, the Italian Somaliland, the French Somali Coast, the Northern Frontier District of Kenya (as part of the British East African Administration). The rest of the Somali territory (known as Western Somaliland or Ogaden) was left under the rule of King Menelik of Ethiopia."²² In rough terms, the area that was British Somaliland has now attempted to reclaim independence from Somalia by declaring itself the Republic of Somaliland. The rest of contemporary Somalia was Italian Somaliland and the French Somali Coast is now Djibouti. The other territories are still part of Kenya and Ethiopia, respectively.

The British and Italians had very different styles of colonial rule, with the British exercising relatively indirect rule and the Italians attempting to reorder the traditional political and social interactions into their own version of a modern state.²³ Each brought its own challenges when independence came as the two territories then attempted to build a single, centralized state administration. It has been argued that the reason the north, or the self-declared Republic of Somaliland, has been able to rebuild and find relative peace is due to the fact that many of the indigenous structures were left in place by the British, whereas in the south these structures were completely destroyed (first by the Italians, then by General Barre's regime, and finally by the conflict) and so there is nothing left to rebuild.²⁴ Following this logic, a Somali state in the south now must be built from the ground up.

Somalia as it exists today was created in 1960 by the merger of British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland at the end of the colonial era. These two pieces of territory do not, however, account for what some maintain is "historical Somalia." The Ogaden region of Ethiopia, Djibouti, and North Eastern Province of Kenya all have significant Somali populations, and there has been some effort to unite these regions into one "Greater Somalia." In 1960 a referendum was held in Djibouti (or French Somaliland as it was then known). The choice the people there faced was either joining with Somalia or remaining part of the French Empire. The voters chose the latter, although

there are claims of vote rigging.²⁵ Undeterred, Somalia had, within the first decade of independence, attempted to foment unrest in both Ethiopia and Kenya in the hope that this would move them closer to creating a "Greater Somalia." Instead this led to long-term problems with their neighbors, particularly Ethiopia who subsequently had a significant impact on the current conflict in Somalia.

Immediately after independence a parliamentary democracy was put into place in Somalia which had some initial success. Whether this could have been successful over the long-term, however, is not possible to judge as a military coup in 1969 brought Major General Mohammed Siyad Barre to power. Noted Somalia scholar, I. M. Lewis argues that up to this point Somalia had been known for

democracy at home and trouble abroad. The first of these characterisations referred to the striking persistence of a vigorous and effective multi-party parliamentary system, and the second to the seemingly uniquely intractable nature of the "Somali Dispute" which committed the Republic to supporting the secessionist claims of the contiguous Somali populations of Kenya, Ethiopia and French Somaliland [now Djibouti], at the price of severely strained relations with these neighbouring states.²⁶

The military dictatorship of Barre was one of the more infamous regimes of the Cold War. He came to power promoting an ideology of "scientific socialism," nationalising many industries and organizing cooperatives in rural areas. Throughout the 1970s Barre used a mixture of ideology and clan ties to promote people around him. As his rule became more tyrannical during the 1980s, the ideology mostly faded away and clan ties became the most important sign of loyalty to the regime. Barre felt that there were three clans that could be particularly relied upon at this time because of their ties to his immediate family. These were the Marehan, Ogaden, and Dulbahante clans.²⁷

Like many dictators, Barre sought to rid himself of anyone who could challenge his authority. He systematically destroyed the middle classes and the "disappearing" of opponents has been likened to the disappearances in South America, indicating how widespread this practice was.²⁸ A combination of opposition to the increased repression at home and the end of the Cold War abroad meant that Barre lost his grip on power and was overthrown by a coalition of opposition forces in 1991.

Unfortunately for Somalia, after Barre was overthrown the coalition lost its uniting purpose. It imploded and "warlords" started to fight for control of Mogadishu. Shaul Shay lists the five main movements present in the power struggles of the early 1990s, as follows²⁹:

- 1 The USC (the United Somali Congress) – of the Hawiye tribe in central Somalia, the dominant movement in the state;
- 2 The SNM (Somalia National Movement) – of the Isaaq tribe in the Somaliland area;
- 3 The SPM (the Somali Salvation Movement) – in the Ogaden area;
- 4 The SSLF (the Somali Salvation and Liberation Front) – of the Mayerteen tribe;
- 5 The SDM (the Somali Democratic Movement) – of the Rathanwein tribe in north Somalia

Over the next 20 years, these factions did not consolidate but rather disintegrated, with some of the older factions continuing to fight and new factions joining the conflict all the time. The shifting alliances and new acronyms announcing the inclusion of new groups to the conflict have only served to heighten the confusion surrounding this conflict.

Religion at first had very little to do with this civil war. Somalia is almost entirely Sunni Muslim, so the conflict tended to be over which faction held power and not which religion became dominant. In addition to this, Somalia was typically described as a moderate Muslim country—often referred to as “a veil lightly worn”³⁰—in contrast to more fundamentalist countries such as Saudi Arabia. As the conflict has continued, this has changed and religious affiliation has become more important, particularly as outside influences (Iran, Sudan, Al Qaeda, and radical entities from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states) entered Somalia in the hope of propagating their form of Islam.³¹ When the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) then seemed to be bringing a measure of stability to Mogadishu in the mid-2000s, these courts began to gather some support among the Somali population. The UIC was recognized as a group capable of building a broad-based coalition of support and that proved, for a while, to be capable of governing within Mogadishu without necessarily resorting to violence. However, the UIC has always been viewed as an ambiguous entity and has particularly been viewed with suspicion by Ethiopia and the United States. Because the UIC was a coalition of different clerics and mosques, “each court was heavily influenced by the ideology of its leader, some of whom were moderate like Sheikh Sharif Ahmed while others were hardliners, such as Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys.”³² This meant that, while the UIC did have huge success in bringing stability and peace to Mogadishu in 2006, some courts also took this opportunity to implement shar’ia law in areas of the city. Support for the UIC within Somalia was therefore mixed and the actions of the more extreme members of the UIC drew unfavorable attention from the

United States and Ethiopia, who were concerned that the price of peace in Somalia would be a hardline Islamist government.

In the early 2000s, while the UIC was gaining strength within Somalia, negotiations were taking place in Kenya that would create the TFG. Formed between late 2004 and early 2005, the TFG was the successor to the TNG that was undermined by Ethiopia, after becoming "alarmed by the influence of Islamist groups."³³ However within weeks of formation "two rival camps had emerged within the TFG,"³⁴ and by the end of 2005 the TFG was close to collapse. External factors, including concerns about the rise of the UIC in early 2006, however, helped to revive the fortunes of the TFG, and the government was relocated from Kenya to Baidoa (some 250 km inland from Mogadishu) in February 2006. Although by this stage the TFG was the internationally recognized government of Somalia, in practice it controlled no territory in Somalia and had very little legitimacy among ordinary Somalis.

While the TFG was attempting to establish itself within Baidoa, the UIC was consolidating its territorial gains in and around Mogadishu and successfully bringing enough order to these areas that not only did the conflict cease but "crime plummeted and businesses reopened."³⁵ As the UIC approached Baidoa, "the Ethiopians responded by sending thousands of troops, backed by armour, artillery, and aircraft, into Somalia."³⁶ Unused to fighting a modern army, the UIC was overwhelmed and rapidly destroyed. The Ethiopians then took control of Mogadishu. It is perhaps not surprising the Ethiopians would enter the conflict to protect the TFG, which they had a large part in setting up. However, rather than protecting and strengthening the TFG, Ethiopia's intervention had the effect of weakening the TFG and confirming in the minds of Somalis that the TFG was indeed the puppet government of the Ethiopians. Relations between Somalia and Ethiopia have over the last 60 years generally been fraught and this only worsened with the Ogaden war of 1977 when Somalia invaded Ethiopia in an attempt to bring the Ogaden region of Ethiopia (home mainly to Somalis) into a "Greater Somalia." Ethiopia defeated the Somali army with support from the Soviets and the Cubans so comprehensively that General Barre was forced to relinquish his dreams of a Greater Somalia. Thus the thought of Ethiopian troops on Somali soil was particularly unpalatable to the Somalis and few believed the claims that they entered Somalia simply to support the TFG and to prevent a deteriorating humanitarian situation.

The invasion of Somalia by Ethiopia is also credited with the increasing radicalization of Al Shabaab, a radical and violent wing of the UIC. The Ethiopian army was unable to defeat Al Shabaab and instead "throughout 2007 and 2008, using hit-and-run attacks, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), assassinations, and bombings, Al Shabaab stymied the Ethiopian advance

into the south.”³⁷ Since the withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops, Al Shabaab has used similar tactics against adversaries within Somalia and has also added suicide attacks to their repertoire, apparently as a direct result of the affiliation with Al Qaeda’s core leadership.³⁸ The most infamous attack completed by Al Shabaab was the 2010 double suicide bombing in Kampala, Uganda. They targeted a restaurant and rugby club (where, it was known, crowds would gather to watch the football World Cup) as revenge against Uganda for their involvement in the African Union mission in Somalia, AMISOM.³⁹

Over the last decade there has also been a significant growth in piracy off the Somali coast.⁴⁰ While this will be discussed in significant detail later in the book, at this point it is important to note that the Gulf of Aden is an important shipping route and it was here that the Somali conflict took on its first significant global dimension as the increase in piracy resulted in the disruption of this shipping route. There has been much speculation about the motives of the pirates and the eventual destination of the money paid in ransoms by companies desperate to ensure the return of their ships and crew. This is of particular concern to the United States, which has included Al Shabaab on their list of Foreign Terrorist Organisations.⁴¹ It seems highly unlikely that none of the ransom money has made its way to Al Shabaab and other factions within the conflict but there is little direct evidence that the piracy is carried out with the explicit aim of raising funds for terrorism. The other main point that should be made here is that the evidence is clear that the only long-term solution to the issue of piracy off the Somali coast is peace on land. Somaliland has dealt admirably with the piracy off its coast and even Puntland, whose state infrastructure is not as well-developed as Somaliland’s, has attempted to reduce piracy. In the summer of 2006 the UIC also succeeded in reducing piracy off the coast of southern Somalia by bringing a semblance of peace and stability to Mogadishu.⁴²

Although the rise of Al Shabaab and its affiliation to Al Qaeda guaranteed that Somalia would be back in the international headlines by 2011 it was the widespread famine that kept international focus on the war-torn country. According to the United Nations, “a catastrophic combination of conflict, high food prices and drought has left more than 11 million people in desperate need.”⁴³ In August 2011 MSNBC was reporting that, according to nutrition and mortality surveys verified by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 29,000 children under the age of 5 had already died.⁴⁴ As of September, the BBC was reporting that up to 750,000 people would perish due to the current drought and famine in Somalia.⁴⁵

Ahmed I. Samatar argues that there are (at least) seven factors that have contributed to the current famine:

(1) the legendary niggardliness, with regard to rainfall, and brittleness of the Somali environment, (2) nearly a century-long process of desertification typified by the enormous growth of charcoal for both domestic use and, contemporaneously, as a lucrative export commodity, (3) the effects of the accelerating global warming and climate change on the Sahel zone of Africa, (4) war, civic dissolution, and the demise of the national state and other public institutions, (5) the absence of visionary and competent leadership capable of resurrecting the national momentum and collective confidence, (6) the exhaustion, on the part of the global community, of solidaristic sympathy as a result of the endless Somali xenophobia, self-mutilation, and repetitive failure to chart an achievable national scheme for renewable, and (7) foreign interventions/interferences that calculatingly or inadvertently derail genuine efforts to do the right thing.⁴⁶

The actions of some of the armed factions within Somalia have had particularly pernicious effects on this human disaster, especially Al Shabaab who expelled international NGOs from areas under their control and were initially reluctant to allow them reentry at the beginning of the famine.⁴⁷ The problem of navigating around Al Shabaab has therefore increased the amount of time it is taking for food aid to reach some of the most vulnerable, especially in south Somalia. There have also been recent reports of Al Shabaab sending people back to their famine-ravaged villages "ahead of the rainy season so they can prepare to farm."⁴⁸ These people apparently are being given no choice about returning and there are serious question marks over whether they are receiving the food aid Al Shabaab has promised.

As is clear, the key to solving many of the problems currently facing the Somali people is to find a lasting solution to the conflict within the country and to rebuild a functioning governance structure. However, the lack of resolution has not been for want of trying. Over the years there have been both formal and informal negotiations hosted by many countries and with many different facilitators. Interpeace, an NGO which has been very involved in the attempts to bring peace to Somalia, produced two tables detailing the most important of these and it is worth reproducing these here to demonstrate how many actors have been involved, many over a significant number of years, in the pursuit of peace.

Clearly a new approach by those attempting to negotiate peace in Somalia is necessary. There was an attempt to do this with the creation of the "post-transitional government" in 2012. Instead of the international peace conferences held abroad, negotiations in 2012 took place within Somalia, and with an attempt to bring the wider population into the process. Although the security situation did not allow for direct elections, elders from the major sectors of society were invited to Mogadishu to select members of parliament on behalf

Table 1 National reconciliation conference⁴⁹

Conference	Date	Parties	Host Country	Facilitator
Djibouti I	5-11 June 1991	SSDF, SPM, USC, SAMO, SNU, SDM	Djibouti	Government of Djibouti
Djibouti II	15-21 July 1991	SSDF, SPM, USC, SAMO, SNU, SDM	Djibouti	Government of Djibouti
Informal Preparatory Meeting on National Reconciliation	January 1993	15 factions	Ethiopia	United Nations
Addis Conference on National Reconciliation	March 1993	15 factions	Ethiopia	United Nations-Government of Ethiopia
National Salvation Council (Sodere)	November 1996—January 1997	26 factions	Ethiopia	Government of Ethiopia
Cairo Conference	November 1997	Hussein Aideed's government & NSC	Egypt	Government of Egypt
Somalia National Peace Conference (Arta)	May-August 2000		Djibouti	Government of Djibouti
Somalia National Reconciliation Conference (Eldoret/Mbagathi)	2002–04		Kenya	IGAD/ Government of Kenya

Table 2 Meetings directed toward peace deals between limited numbers of parties

Conference	Date	Parties	Host Country	Facilitator
Nairobi Informals	1994		Kenya	United Nations
Nairobi	October 1996	Ali Mahdi, Hussein Aideed, Osman Atto	Kenya	Government of Kenya
Yemen	May 1997	Hussein Aideed and Osman Atto	Yemen	Government of Yemen
Nakuru Talks	1999		Nakuru, Kenya	Government of Kenya
Khartoum	2006	TFG, ICU	Sudan	Arab League
Djibouti	2008–09	TFG, ARS-Djibouti	Djibouti	United Nations

of their communities. Although far from perfect, and almost certainly influenced by bribes,⁵⁰ this represents something of an improvement on what had come before. Writing after the election of the new Somali President, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, Ken Menkhaus argues that this was a “seismic event in Somalia” and the election “electrified Somalis and both surprised and relieved the international community.”⁵¹ A good part of President Mohamed’s popularity comes from the fact that, until recently, he has not been involved in politics and so has not been tainted by involvement or proximity to the widespread corruption within the TFG. A former university professor, he spent the vast majority of the conflict working with civil society groups to promote education and to build peace throughout the country.⁵² However, the new government still controls very little territory within Somalia and what it does control is only held with the help of the AU mission within Somalia. There is a long way to go yet before it becomes apparent whether this election was truly a “seismic event” for Somalia.

Key concepts

This book is about Somalia, but it is also about how the world has approached Somalia over the two decades since its collapse, what this response tells us about changing patterns of global power, and how elements of the Somali conflict have,

in their turn, come to be seen as global threats. While the authors contributing to this volume come from diverse fields and offer diverse perspectives, we will go on to argue that two key concepts are strongly relevant, implicitly and explicitly, in the analyzes that follow: globalization and sovereignty.

Globalization: Theories of globalization, we argue, generally fall into two categories: theories which suggest that globalization can be understood in terms of some single principle and theories which do not. The best-known example of the first category would be the idea of a global capitalist economic system, to which states and therefore the political system are subordinate because they cannot control the economic market forces. In contrast, more cultural sensitive theorists of globalization, most notably, Arjun Appadurai, do not believe that any one set of global flows provides the ultimate key to understanding globalization. In speaking of what he terms the various “scapes” of the globalized world (ethnoscapes, financescapes, technoscapes, infoscapes, and mediascapes), this theorist is careful not to place these in any kind of order. Global flows of people—as he sees it—can reshape global flows of finance. Global flows of media can redetermine global flows of technology and vice versa, and so on.⁵³

We submit that the overarching narrative of this book inclines toward the second approach, with its diverse chapters testifying to the salience of multiple “scapes” of global factors and how these have influenced, and been influenced by, the conflict in Somalia. We do not argue that any of these “scapes” are more important than others; rather, we are more interested in identifying the different “scapes” that exist within this case study and how they interact, and how they may be used to bring the conflict to an end.

Sovereignty: While Somalia technically remains a sovereign state within the international system, it does not function as truly sovereign state in a traditional sense. Clearly, it cannot police its borders, nor ensure the security of its population to both internal and external threats. Yet, it retains the right to send representation to the United Nations, and its official borders and territorial integrity are ensured by international norms. Robert H. Jackson's distinction between positive and negative sovereignty is useful here. In his article “Negative Sovereignty in sub-Saharan Africa,” Jackson argues that traditionally the state emerged within the international system, demonstrated its capabilities to function as a sovereign state, and was gradually recognized as a sovereign state.⁵⁴ However, he goes on to argue that the way in which African states did emerge as independent states after colonialism was a form of negative sovereignty, stating that

“[i]nternational legitimacy in black Africa is not built on local foundations of empirical statehood but originates externally. The seat of negative

sovereignty is undoubtedly the UN General Assembly. The traditional empirical qualifications placed on self-government by the UN Charter (Articles 73 and 76) were overthrown by the 1960 General Assembly Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples which affirmed that "all people have the right to self-determination" and that "inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence."⁵⁵

In the time since Jackson was writing many (although not all) African states have become more stable and functional, as well as more representative of the people within their territory, thus building positive sovereignty. However, Somalia now is an extreme example of negative sovereignty. There is no functional government and the civil war is now over 20 years old. The only reason that Somalia remains a sovereign state is because it is internationally recognized as such, despite meeting none of the traditional conditions of sovereignty.

The lack of positive sovereignty is important because it is this that has led to a number of interventions within Somalia, despite the official recognition of sovereignty throughout the international system, and is the main reason why international actors have been able to use Somalia as a "testing ground" for their own policies and to promote their own interests. The norm of sovereignty (despite recent challenges) is still strong enough to ensure that any intervention into the territory of another sovereign state is carefully justified within the international system. However, because there is no functioning government to object to encroachments on Somali sovereignty, this norm has not been universally respected and has led to incursions into Somali territory by the United Nations, United States, and Ethiopian troops.

The lack of any government enjoying positive sovereignty within Somalia has also meant that there is no formal body putting forward an image of Somalia as a country within the international system. This has allowed others to put forward their own images and use these images for their own benefit. For example, both Al Qaeda and the United States have portrayed Somalia as a front line in the war on terror, despite the fact that there was little evidence of this in 2001. Ironically, this portrayal, combined with internal factors, seems to have been responsible for the rise in Al Shabaab and the subsequent links with Al Qaeda, thus making Somalia a secondary front in the war on terror. China, Japan, the EU, Uganda, and Ethiopia have all in their own way used the image of an anarchic Somalia that has few prospects for peace as a justification for their own experimental projections of power, in a way that would not be possible, had Somalia had a functioning government. This is expanded below in the Book Outline.

Book outline

In the opening chapters, Kate Seaman and Karl Sandstrom provide compelling accounts of how things went wrong, and what brought Somalia—and the international community—to its current impasse. Seaman explains this from the standpoint of the United Nations and the international community, arguing that the UN operation in 1992 undermined the sovereignty of the Somali state to the point where anarchism within Somalia was the norm. It was these conditions that allowed the conflict to develop in such a way that the global impact is now being felt. Seaman also demonstrates how the United Nations used Somalia as a testing ground, sending in the “first operation mandated under Chapter VII of the Charter to be deployed within an internal conflict” when the United Nations authorized Unified Task Forces (UNITAF) were sent into Somalia in 1992. Sandstrom, drawing on extensive field research, demonstrates the continuation of this failure by the international community and in particular the aid and development agencies that have attempted to build or impose peace without a genuine understanding of the Somali context. Sandstrom also demonstrates how this failure is seen from within Somalia itself. To argue that donors and agencies need to understand the local context in which they work has become something of a cliché and yet Sandstrom ably shows that few who intervene, or perhaps more importantly few who fund interventions, truly see the local culture. Instead, they impose their own understandings of the culture and import their own development strategies and experiments, even when the intervention is conducted with the best of intentions.

The next section concerns itself with the transnational consequences of the failure to find an early solution to the Somali civil war. Drawing on social movement theory, Peter Henne offers an insightful theoretical examination of why religious groups such as Al-Shabaab may be interested in allying themselves with wider global movements such as Al Qaeda, but also explores why this association may be problematic within the Somali context. Somalia, it was thought, would be an ideal safe haven for Al Qaeda after it was ejected from Afghanistan—it was a Muslim country, with an ongoing conflict and no state apparatus to stop them from training and planning attacks. Al Qaeda also claimed involvement in the Battle of Mogadishu in 1993. If true it would demonstrate that Al Qaeda had previously had a presence within the country; however, there is little evidence of this. However, Al Qaeda did not move to Somalia after the United States invaded Afghanistan in 2001. There are multiple theories as to why this did not happen, although there are two main, and connected, theories. The first is that Al Qaeda attempted to

move to Somalia at various points throughout the 1990s and found that the disruptions caused by the ongoing conflict were more of a hindrance to their operations than a benefit.⁵⁶ Because there was no government, Al Qaeda (like everyone else in Somalia) had to seek protection from local “warlords” and this was not as reliable as the protection subsequently offered by the Taliban in Afghanistan. Connected to this is the idea that Al Qaeda preaches a very different kind of Islam than has traditionally been followed within Somalia and therefore the group found little support within the general population. Within this context, an alliance between Al-Shabaab and Al Qaeda was in no sense inevitable and Henne offers a nuanced explanation of how this came about, demonstrating a deep understanding of the Somali culture. Henne then goes on to highlight the limited extent of the impact this alliance has had on the conflict in Somalia. In this chapter, Henne offers an interesting alternative to often simplistic discussions of politics versus religion as supposedly contrasting explanations.

Malet, Priest, and Staggs’ chapter then goes on to address the opposite problem: that of foreign fighters, often from prosperous developed countries, who travel to serve alongside militia groups in Somalia. Malet et al. demonstrate the effectiveness of the recruitment techniques used by Al Shabaab in drawing both Somali and non-Somali youths to Somalia to fight for them, often from comfortable existences in the United States, United Kingdom, and Europe. As Malet et al. point out, these recruits cannot “know” Somalia, many having been born overseas and having never visited the country, and have therefore been persuaded by the twin ideas of restoring Somalia to its rightful place as a fully functioning member of the international community and of joining their Muslim brothers in the fight against the enemies of Islam, in particular the Ethiopian army and the United States. By placing the question of foreign fighters in historical perspective, Malet et al. also provide a provocative set of hypotheses about the relationship between foreign fighter involvement and the duration and intensity of civil wars such as Somalia’s.

While the role of Somalia as an exporter, an importer, or an ideal for global jihadism may represent a concern for the future given the relatively small international impact of this to date, piracy in the international waters off the Somali coast is very much a present concern. Peter Lehr discusses the origins of the problem, the apparent motivations of pirates, possible future developments, and, in particular, how states have formed a multinational force to tackle the problem. The problem of Somali piracy has given rise to an experiment of cooperation within the international community as many states around the world have joined forces in an attempt to end this problem. As Lehr points out, the United States, EU, NATO as well as China and Japan have been involved in counter-piracy operations. However, the problem of piracy

is but a symptom of a wider problem, and stopping pirates from attempting to board vulnerable vessels will do nothing to stop piracy at large; hence, the solution must be found in ending the conflict on land.

As Somalia's disarray has had growing repercussions beyond its borders, so have individual powers increasingly found it necessary to intervene, in one capacity or another, in its affairs. Intriguingly, this has included responses by powers that reflect the growing multipolarity of the international arena. It is these responses that provide the theme for third section of the book. Michael J. Boyle opens with an examination of US policy toward the Somali conflict and the legacy of the 1993 intervention. He argues that US policy from 1993 to the present day has ensured that the United States is not taken seriously in Somalia as any threats to intervene clearly ring hollow, thus necessitating the involvement of other (and in a sense "untainted") international actors. Boyle also demonstrates how the 1993 intervention by the United States was an experiment on the part of then President George H. W. Bush, who saw Somalia as an opportunity to put into practice the theory behind his "New World Order." This was the first time that the United States was involved militarily in what was (for the US) purely a humanitarian emergency with no broader national security implications. This experiment was brought to an abrupt end with the Battle of Mogadishu and the killing of 18 US soldiers, and this would have a huge subsequent impact on US foreign policy toward both Somalia and other conflicts and humanitarian emergencies, most notably the genocide in Rwanda.

In his comprehensive chapter on the geopolitics of the Horn of Africa, Hansen demonstrates both how the international and civil conflicts of the surrounding states have influenced the conflict in Somalia, as well as how the Somali conflict has impacted these conflicts. Regional powers and intergovernmental organizations have been involved in the Somali conflict since the very beginning and by laying out the connections as this chapter does, it is made very clear how any resolution to the conflict will have to take into account these regional dynamics, as well as the dynamics of the conflict itself.

One of the actors with little prior involvement in Somalia is China, the rising power on the world stage. Based on fieldwork in the region, Monika Thukar demonstrates that China's involvement in Somalia goes far beyond issues of piracy or access to oil. By breaking down the differing aspects of China's involvement in Somalia, she demonstrates that China has nuanced policies toward the different countries in the region and understands how to position itself as a superpower on global issues. In particular, China has used the issue of piracy emanating from Somalia as an opportunity to demonstrate that it has the ability to cooperate within the international system. By contributing in this

manner to an international issue, China is demonstrating that it is now one of the major powers within the current international system, and not simply an economic powerhouse.

China's growing status as a world power is of natural concern to its most immediate geographical rival: Japan. Yee-Kuang Heng explores how Japan, despite minimal previous engagement with Somalia, has bent powerful military taboos (in place since World War II) in order to dispatch its ships on protective missions to the Horn of Africa. The pacifist constitution that Japan adopted after World War II had prohibited Japan from engaging in any military action outside of Japanese territory. The issue of Somali piracy and the widespread impact it has had, however, has given Japan an opportunity to test the limits of the constitution, as Heng demonstrates in this chapter.

Moving away from traditional state-based power; for the European Union, engagement with Somalia has been an opportunity not only to explore new force projection options, but, as Maria Luisa Sanchez Barrueco argues, has occurred within the context of "general debate about the place of the EU in the international arena." As a unique experiment within the international system, the EU has to decide the limits of its power, both in relation to the individual member states and within the international system. Sanchez Barrueco demonstrates how the EU has used Somalia as an opportunity to project international power while not clashing with individual member states as she explores and assesses a variety of European Union initiatives aimed to support both physical and economic security in Somalia. She argues that European Union policies contradict the idea of the EU as an ethical, humanitarian "normative power," instead suggesting that the Union acts more like a conventional "structural power," wielding influence through compulsion and coercion as well as attraction, development, and the use of NGO partners.

Given the numerous attempts by outsiders to intervene in one way or another in the Somali situation, one might easily become cynical about the potential for outsiders to make a positive difference to the country. However, as Steve Kibble and Michael Walls argue in the final section of this book, such a view is too simplistic. Apart from demonstrating that the idea of "leaving Somalia to the Somalis" invites an overly simplistic view of nationality and nation-building, they also highlight the fact that Somali culture already contains spaces for outside intervention, which played an important role in making possible the highly successful creation of a *de facto* state in Somaliland. These spaces may have much to tell us about the conditions for any successful future peacebuilding initiatives. Based on their own extensive field-research, Kibble and Walls demonstrate simple and potentially effective ways for the international community to support local peacebuilding efforts, working with the local cultures and not against them.

The conclusion will bring together all the threads in this book by offering some ways forward based on the evidence presented. States, for the foreseeable future, are likely to remain the best-placed and prepared organizations to intervene in natural and humanitarian disasters. However, states are only likely to take part in a short-term intervention making them unlikely candidates for long-term slow moving interventions necessary to encourage the building of a lasting peace in conflict-ravaged societies. Kibble and Walls demonstrate how the international community could play a positive role in the search for peace in Somalia but this role is unlikely to be played by states, which would be reluctant to commit to such a long-term commitment and would also have their own foreign policy agendas in play. Here is a role that the United Nations and other international organizations (both state-based and non-state-based) could play—it is not high-profile or glamorous but they should have the capacity for long-term commitment and should be politically neutral enough to be respected actors within this role.

A final thought

It is important to observe, in closing, that while Somalia may represent state failure of a totality which is difficult to parallel elsewhere, it is unlikely that the issues raised by its globalizing conflict, and the attempts to deal with it, are unique. Enduring civil wars are not new. Nor even is their globalization. What is different today is not only the speed and scale of such globalization, but also the range of actors involved and the comparative evenness with which power is distributed among them. Thus in studying the globalization and the new transnationalization of the conflict in Somalia, it is impossible not to consider wider stories about how change in global balances of power—both among states, and between states and non-state actors—are beginning to reshape world politics. The fact that a country without a government, with a GDP per capita of \$600,⁵⁷ almost without official armed forces, can present threats sufficient to prompt involvement by the world's wealthiest and most powerful actors clearly says something about growing levels of interdependence in the contemporary world. If nothing else, the case of Somalia offers—to use the term suggested by the anthropologist Lila Abu Lughod—a fascinating “diagnostic of power,”⁵⁸ showing us how its global distribution is changing.

It may, after all this, seem unacceptably glib to suggest that the humanitarian tragedy of Somalia is also an opportunity, that the space it creates—both in Somalia itself, and in terms of the virtual “space” of international law and great power relations—may be the place for building something new. But if, as was argued at the time of the US's ill-fated

expedition to Somalia, the professed impartiality of the United States and United Nations interventions actually helped sustain the anarchy it sought to stem by failing to recognize that—in the end—an armed intervention must leave someone in power, then there may be surprising hope in the corollary of this. Perhaps a more diverse group of actors (not all of them necessarily states) working in concert not out of a supposedly selfless, open-ended humanitarian impulse, but with the recognition that a resolution to Somalia's conflict is in their practical interest, may actually have a better chance of bringing some kind of peace.

Notes

- 1 We would like to thank Michael J. Boyle, Michael Kenwick, and Michael Kostboth for their comments on earlier versions of this chapter. All errors of course remain our own.
- 2 Bronwyn E. Bruton, *Somalia: A New Approach* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2010), 6.
- 3 Benjamin Powell, Ryan Ford, and Alex Nowrastah, "Somalia After State Collapse: Chaos or Improvement?" (Independent Institute, 2006).
- 4 Peter T. Leeson, "Better Off Stateless: Somalia Before and After Government Collapse," *Journal of Comparative Economics* 35:4 (2007), 689.
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SECTION ONE

The failure of the international

1

The United Nations, peacekeeping, and the globalization of the conflict in Somalia

Kate Seaman

Introduction

The original intervention in Somalia almost proved to be the undoing of the United Nations. As American troops were captured and killed and the pictures displayed on televisions around the world, it seemed the organization had little chance of recovery and even less chance of success in the future. This dramatic situation led directly to another abject failure on the part of the United Nation: the inability, and unwillingness, to respond to the genocide in Rwanda in a timely and appropriate manner. Following these failures, and many years down the line, Rwanda appears to be on the path to recovery, albeit a rocky one. On the other hand Somalia remains in ruins.

This chapter will argue that the approach of the United Nations to the conflict, and the focus on reconstituting the central state apparatus only exacerbated the situation on the ground. It will look at the role the initial peacekeeping operations played in opening up the conflict to international players such as NGOs and private companies. It will argue that the United Nations played a key role in the introduction of international players and the management of established players on the ground. Finally it will argue that

the introduction of international actors and the development of an aid-based economy only contributed to the escalation of the conflict as it altered the dynamics, providing new resources and new reasons to fight.

Somalia has become the prime example of both a failed state and failed international interventions. As such it provides a unique demonstration of the unintended consequences of such interventions and the often negative impact that the international community can have on the dynamics of a conflict situation. It also provides an opportunity for lessons to be learned about the importance of managing the wider context of peacekeeping operations and how specificity in both mandate and resourcing is critical to success.

Background to conflict

At independence in 1960, Somalia looked set for a stable and secure future as an independent nation state. The country, composed of two former colonies, one British and one Italian, was the most ethnically homogenous country within Africa. The Somali people all shared the same language, religion, and cultural traditions. Superficially there was no reason for the fledgling democracy to fail:

Unlike many African indigenous peoples, whose differences and conflicts stem from ethnic segmentation and the struggle for power, the Somalis are people of the same ethnicity. They speak the same Somali language and preponderantly have followed Islam as a religious faith since the twelfth century.¹

In reality, however, Somali society was much more complex. It was based on a traditional form of kinship:

The traditional kinship system which knit Somali society together was fundamentally different from the present clanism. Two central features of that kinship were the Heer ("social contract"), a form of constitution based on tradition, and the dictates of Islam. Blood ties (lineage) was only a part of this complex social contract. This system had an economic counterpart: nomadism and peasant agriculture. All households had access to productive resources. The system was egalitarian and lacked institutionalized forms of state power.²

It was not until the colonial period that this system was utilized by the dominant class to develop the concept of clanism as a means of mobilizing popular support for their agenda.

There are six main clans in Somalia: the Darod, Digil, Dir, Hawiye, Issaq, and Rahanwein;³ each of which is further divided between various subclans and lineages. The split between the clans led to a plethora of parties becoming involved in the newly established democratic process; the huge number of opinions and ideas being represented and the continuous struggle to gain power reduced once promising political institutions to an unstable and volatile system. Another issue in the creation of Somali national identity was the division of ethnic Somalis among bordering countries. When the country originally gained independence the newly established government made clear their intention to create a greater Somalia by freeing those Somalis out with sovereign Somali territory. Over time this grand plan was eliminated as the struggle between clans became the focus of Somali politics. The idea was not, however, completely forgotten and was to reemerge a decade later in the policies of General Muhammad Siad Barre.

Following the assassination of the incumbent president Abdirashid Ali Sharma'arke in 1969, Barre engineered a military coup to oust the government and gain control. Barre operated a fervent nationalist agenda and involved Somalia in a war with neighboring Ethiopia over the contested Ogaden region in an attempt to create a greater Somalia. Although the majority of the Somali people had originally supported Barre, his popularity decreased over time as his reliance on his clan for support and security increased.⁴ This reliance on a clan powerbase led to an increase in the emphasis that was placed on clan and subclan ties; this was to be the undoing of the Somali state.

From the 1980s on, Barre faced mounting opposition from a variety of parties including the Somali National Movement (SNM), the United Somali Congress (USC), the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), the Somali Democratic Movement (SDM), and several more. Facing defeat, Barre fled Mogadishu in 1991 and was replaced by the USC, a political party based within the Hawiye clan. The chairman of the USC, General Mohammed Farah Aidid of the Habr Gedir subclan who also held allegiance to the Somali National Alliance (SNA), was then declared the de facto leader of Somalia. This angered another subclan within the Hawiye, the Abgal, who refused to recognize the election of Aidid and proceeded to declare Ali Mahdi Mohammed the interim president. Somalia collapsed into civil war as the two opposing factions struggled to assert their right to power. With no central government to ensure stability, the country was quickly divided between various rival militias as other clans became involved in the conflict seeking a chance to assert their influence. The violent conflict disrupted all areas of Somali life and most dangerously the agricultural process. The inability to produce enough food coupled with the displacement of huge numbers of the population combined to produce one of the worst humanitarian disasters of the 1990s.⁵

Although the descent into civil war was a major factor in the following humanitarian crisis, the problems the country faced can be traced even further back. "The famine that gripped Somalia in 1992 resulted from the degeneration of the country's political system and economy"⁶ and this degeneration began under the rule of Siad Barre who "with his manipulation of aid left Somalia with no functional administration (and essentially no government income except aid flows)."⁷ Both Terrence Lyons and Ahmed Samatar liken the process of state collapse in Somalia to a long and complex degenerative disease, which "left behind little but the wreckage of distorted traditions and artificial institutions, a vacuum that the most ruthless elements in the society soon filled."⁸ It was the humanitarian crisis rather than the collapse of the state which prompted international intervention. The images of starving children displayed on television screens across the world introduced the so-called "CNN effect" into humanitarian interventions as world leaders were galvanized into taking action. "International perceptions of the Somali war were straightforward and naïve: thugs were looting humanitarian aid and a military intervention would allow the population to gain free access to food and thereby escape starvation."⁹ The situation on the ground, however, was much more complex.

The United Nations in Somalia

The United Nations had been involved in providing humanitarian relief within Somalia prior to the collapse of the Barre Government. However, following the descent into civil war "amid increasing security concerns, the United Nations withdrew its relief operations in mid-1991, leaving only a few NGOs to deal with the escalating humanitarian crisis."¹⁰ At the time "neither the means nor the will existed in the United Nations to mount a major humanitarian response to the swelling crisis. International assistance for the first year and a half of the civil war was left to the International Committee of the Red Cross and a handful of relief agencies"¹¹

The failure of the United Nations to engage with the problems in Somalia was so detrimental that it led to the unprecedented situation of the ICRC publicly criticizing the operations of the United Nations within the country in late 1991. Unfortunately in many ways Somalia was a victim of timing, with the crisis in Somalia starting "at a time when the international community was completely focused on the beginning of the . . . Gulf War."¹² It was not until 1992 that Somalia began to garner much attention on the international scene. The introduction of Resolution 733 marked a renewed interest on the part of the United Nations with the problems of the failed state. This resolution implemented an arms embargo on Somalia, which many analysts likened to

closing the gate after the horse has escaped. This was closely followed by the implementation of peace talks between the major warring factions.

Following the signing of a ceasefire, the United Nations provided a mission designed to observe the ceasefire and to ensure the safe delivery of humanitarian aid. The UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I) was ill-equipped to deal with the situation in Somalia and with only 500¹³ lightly armed observers it was unlikely to succeed in fulfilling its mandate to ensure the safe delivery of the huge amount of aid pouring into the country. The situation rapidly deteriorated until "every instance of communal tension had the potential to quickly escalate into a much more lethal conflict."¹⁴ By the time UNOSOM I was replaced by a US-led force in the form of the UNITAF, Somalia was "an anarchistic battleground for rival warlords."¹⁵

The UNITAF forces arrived in Somalia on the 9 December 1992¹⁶ setting another precedent within the United Nations as the first operation mandated under Chapter VII of the Charter to be deployed within an internal conflict. The American-led operation had a very clear mandate "to establish a secure environment for humanitarian operations within Somalia."¹⁷ The forces were not under UN control and instead reported directly to the American military command, which was determined to "deploy a large force capable of controlling the violence and making it clear to the faction leaders that order would be restored with or without their cooperation."¹⁸ The aims of the mission were limited to opening supply routes for aid and protecting those routes until a newly formed UN operation was in place. The intervention of the United States in Somalia "suggested that humanitarian intervention was securing a new legitimacy in post-Cold War international society."¹⁹ Unfortunately, this new-found legitimacy was to be short lived. The US forces were replaced by the reconfigured UNOSOM II in March 1993 with a much broader mandate and it was hoped that the new UN force would help bring order to a country in anarchy. Unfortunately it was not long before the situation deteriorated. The UN involvement in Somalia came to a swift end with an attack on a Pakistani contingent attempting to conduct a weapons inspection. The US then ordered 400 of its rangers to begin the hunt for the warlord who had claimed responsibility for the now infamous "black hawk down" debacle, the deaths of 17 American soldiers, and the end of the political support for the operation.

The following sections of this chapter will now go on to examine in greater detail the problems surrounding the UN intervention in Somalia. These problems include the unique circumstances surrounding the collapse of the Somali state, the questions surrounding the issues of consent, sovereignty, and nonintervention, and the possibility that the provision of aid actually extended the conflict.

Challenges to sovereignty, nonintervention, and consent

The UN intervention in Somalia was in many ways unique. It was the first time that Chapter VII authorization was given to a mission with purely humanitarian goals, it was the first time that a mission had been deployed without the consent of the host state, and it was the first time a mission had been deployed in a country without any form of functioning central government. The international system has, since the peace of Westphalia in 1648, been founded on two key concepts: the inviolable sovereignty of states and the norm of nonintervention. Traditional peacekeeping operations have also been based on the importance of these norms, with the emphasis being placed on gaining the consent of the host state before deployment. The situation in Somalia, however, posed a problem for those planning the intervention, a problem of two parts: how to intervene in a country where there was no host government to give consent and how to enable that intervention without undermining the norms of nonintervention and sovereignty?

In order to understand the ways in which the situation in Somalia challenged the concept of sovereignty we must first define the concept. The generally accepted understanding of sovereignty is "that in which prime political authority is conceded to those institutions, called states, claiming the monopoly of violence within their respective territorial borders."²⁰ Sovereignty has retained its importance even through the process of decolonization, a period during which the United Nations granted "sovereignty by administrative fiat, simply because a country had achieved independence," which "was a revolutionary departure from traditional practices whereby sovereignty had to be earned."²¹ In relation to peacekeeping this has meant that "[i]t is not lack of information that stops the United Nations and other would-be mediators from preventing conflicts; it is the principle of sovereignty, which legitimizes governments' reluctance to let mediators concern themselves with their internal conflicts."²²

In Somalia, however, there was no government to prevent external intervention in the crisis. The Security Council then faced a decision as to how to justify an intervention given that the provision of consent is underwritten by the "assumption that the state has a government with effective territorial control, allowing it to offer or refuse consent."²³ This problem led to the groundbreaking arguments outlined in Resolution 794²⁴ which mandated the UNITAF operation. Within this resolution the humanitarian disaster in Somalia was constituted as a threat to international peace and security, the first time a humanitarian situation had been labeled as such. Also included within the resolution was particular emphasis on the uniqueness of the situation in Somalia which had

raised numerous difficult questions. One of the most important issues raised was whether Somalia was still a sovereign state. This question was predicated on the collapse of the Somali government and whether this collapse had led to loss of sovereignty for the Somali state. Somalia's existence as a sovereign entity then became dependent on the collective judgment of the society of states. In this sense, "states survive either by virtue of their will and capacity to remain sovereign, or by virtue of the externally granted right to territorial integrity and political independence, that is, by virtue of the principle of non-intervention."²⁵ In relation to Somalia the state had no capacity at all in which to remain sovereign and the question then became: does a state which is no longer classified as sovereign still retain the right of nonintervention?

Nonintervention has in many ways been the key factor in ensuring the sovereignty of failed and failing states. Although the principle of nonintervention is facing increasing challenges in the international system today, it is still utilized by states in order to prevent interventions within their territorial boundaries. Because the Security Council could not demonstrate a loss of sovereignty it therefore had to classify the situation within Somalia as a threat to international peace and security. In doing so the Council also demonstrated the inability of the state to protect that right on both a regional and international level. As "legal objections raised by China and other states anxious to protect the non-intervention principle were overcome in the resolution by referring to Somalia as a state without government,"²⁶ the Security Council also demonstrated the fact that there was no sovereign state in which to intervene in the case of Somalia. At the same time the Council was determined to continue "the fiction that Somalia was still a sovereign nation-state."²⁷ While "there is no doubt that Somalia was without an effective government with territorial control at the time of the UN authorization of Operation Restore Hope" and that "the internal conditions in Somalia were closer to anarchy than to empirical statehood,"²⁸ this reality was challenged by the Security Council.

While the operation in Somalia was lauded as a new type of peacekeeping operation, designed to protect the distribution of humanitarian aid in an ongoing conflict, the United Nations and its member states were unwilling to act to address the causes of that conflict. They continued to position Somalia as a sovereign nation state capable of rebuilding and "the idea that Somalia was not able to rule itself—now or for a long time—went so deeply against the organizational grain of the United Nations that an approach incorporating long-term reconstruction was never considered."²⁹

The real problems stemmed from the unwillingness of the international community to become embroiled in a long project of state building. They wanted Somalia to be a simple operation of humanitarian aid distribution and to continue "the illusion that one can intervene in a country beset by

widespread civil violence without affecting domestic politics and without including a nation-building component.”³⁰ This approach ignored the reality that “ultimately civil wars are about the distribution of power”³¹ and that,

Attention must be devoted to rebuilding the institutions whose collapse helped bring on disaster. Stopping a man-made famine means rebuilding political institutions to create order. No intervention in a troubled state such as Somalia can succeed in a few weeks. Unless development aid and external assistance address the long-term political and economic implications of an intervention, it is doomed.³²

By failing to attempt to address the underlying issues and involving itself only in the distribution of aid throughout the ongoing conflict, the United Nations became “simply another party to Somalia’s civil war and thus become part of the problem rather than the solution to the country’s crisis.”³³ This failure has directly contributed to the increased globalization of the conflict, particularly in relation to the inability of the state to deal with external forces. The impact that this had will be examined in the following section, in which it will be argued that the UN intervention also increased the globalization of the conflict with the provision of aid, which was then utilized by parties to the conflict to gain support for their own agendas.

Aid and the globalization of the conflict

It was the large-scale humanitarian crisis, and not the total collapse of the central state, which led to the intervention of both the United Nations and the United States. This intervention has been explained in a variety of ways, the most popular of which is the so-called “CNN effect” whereby the pictures of starving children displayed on television screens across the world impact on public opinion and thereby force the governments and international organizations to take action. In Somalia the situation was portrayed as a fairly straightforward humanitarian intervention in which the United Nations and United States would simply protect the delivery of humanitarian aid and would not become involved in the ongoing conflict.

The original UN mission UNOSOM I “was undermanned and overmatched by warring Somali clan militias.”³⁴ With only 50 military observers and 500 security forces there was little hope that it would be able to achieve its mandate to protect the large amount of humanitarian aid flooding into the country. In an attempt to redress this, Resolution 775 (August 1992) authorized an increase in the number of security forces to be deployed by a further 3,000.

However, by December 1992 the number deployed had only increased to 564. The failure of UNOSOM I led the Secretary General to present the Security Council with five options;

- 1 they could expand UNOSOM
- 2 completely withdraw leaving the aid agencies to negotiate their own agreements with the conflicting parties
- 3 they could construct a large show of force with UNOSOM in the hope that it would deter the factions from attacking both UN forces and aid agencies
- 4 a country-wide enforcement operation undertaken by member states on behalf of the United Nations
- 5 a country-wide operation conducted under the control of the United Nations.³⁵

At this point the United States offered to undertake an enforcement operation and UNITAF or "Operation Restore Hope" was established. The operation was established with a one main aim: "to establish a secure environment for humanitarian operations within Somalia."³⁶ As UNITAF was not under the control of the United Nations, the interpretation of the mandate and the aims of the mission were established by the US military. The American Command decided that "the goal was to deploy a large force capable of controlling the violence and making it clear to the faction leaders that order would be restored with or without their cooperation."³⁷

In the eyes of the Americans, including President Bush, the mission had clearly defined and limited objectives; to open supply routes, get the aid moving and prepare the way for a more traditional UN peacekeeping force. This was in direct contradiction to what the Secretary General had hoped UNITAF would achieve, namely the complete disarmament of the factions involved in the conflict. The Americans had no desire to become embroiled in the complex process of disarming the factions whereas they wanted a clean exit from Somalia. The limited nature of the engagement clearly signaled to the factions involved that the Americans, although exerting their influence at the moment, would not be a continuous thorn in their side.

The failure to deal with the disarmament of all the factions involved in the conflict meant that,

Instead of remaining neutral . . . the United States and United Nations ended up enhancing the roles and status of the warlords. U.S. rules of

engagement in Somalia forbade any interference in Somali-on-Somali violence, despite President Bush's rhetoric in defining the mission. Most important, the failure to disarm the major combatants meant that the United States and the United Nations in effect sided with those who had the most weapons, leaving the weak and defenceless to abandon hope.³⁸

It was clear from the outset that "the warlords benefited financially from the criminal activities of their supporters"³⁹ and that "the country's entire political and economic systems essentially revolved around plundered food."⁴⁰ Warlords were then using plundered food to buy loyalty and to gain influence. This food was being plundered from aid agencies—agencies which it was the responsibility of the US and UN Forces to protect. However,

[w]hen U.S. troops intervened in December 1992 to stop the theft of food, they disrupted the political economy and stepped deep into the muck of Somali politics. By re-establishing some order, the U.S. operation inevitably affected the direction of Somali politics and became nation-building because the most basic component of nation-building is an end to anarchy.⁴¹

In order to secure the safe delivery of aid the United States and United Nations had to gain access to the vulnerable sections of the population, and the fastest way to do this was to work with the faction leaders. Despite the fact that within Somalia,

[t]he warlords were widely seen as war criminals who had plunged Somalia into chaos and famine. Instead of arresting the warlords, the US treated them as legitimate political players at a time when they were on the backfoot and their authority was ebbing. Thereafter, the UN's freedom of action in searching for a political solution was severely circumscribed by the involvement of the faction leaders.⁴²

By treating them as legitimate players the United Nations then gave them legitimacy. This led to their influence increasing as time went on. It also led to the development of an aid-based economy and an increased use of black market trading. The problem then became the failure of the forces to follow up on the need for nation building within Somalia.

The United States was unwilling to become involved in any long-term operation to ensure the reconstitution of the Somali state and because of this the situation only escalated, with relief aid workers and foreign journalists becoming,

favourite targets as gunmen resumed control of large areas of the city. The subsequent upsurge of attacks persuaded prominent aid organizations like the Save the Children Fund to continue spending nearly \$10,000 per week hiring local gunmen to provide "security."⁴³

This spending then placed even greater emphasis within Somali society on the importance of owning a gun. The gun in Somalia was a means to make a living. The reality was that "such spending reflected what was seen as an ambiguous UNITAF commitment to relief agency security."⁴⁴ There was on behalf of the United States and aid agencies within Somalia a failure to recognize the

inescapable reciprocity between civil and military goals. Military commanders cannot expect a failed state to become inherently peaceful and stable and their efforts to be worthwhile in the long run without the work of developmental and civil affairs experts. Likewise, humanitarian workers must recognize that the relief goods they handle in failed states can become the currency of warlords.⁴⁵

There was an attempt made to address this with the deployment of the second UN mission UNOSOM II. As soon as the Americans felt that the security situation in Somalia had stabilized they handed over control to the United Nations and UNOSOM II. The new UN force was now responsible for ensuring political reconciliation between the parties involved: assisting in the creation of political and administrative structures, disarming and demobilizing the various militias, enforcing the arms embargo placed on the country, reestablishing the police force and judicial system, overseeing the return of refugees, aiding the de-mining process, and ensuring the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Somalia.⁴⁶ It was expected to achieve all of this with less than half the number of troops which the Americans had provided for the UNITAF operation.

While "the previous UN and US forces had confined their mission to securing humanitarian relief activities" UNOSOM II, with a much smaller number of troops was given an extended mission involving "the introduction of grassroots democracy, a process which would put the United Nations at cross purposes with every warlord in the country. The result was a resurgence of violence to levels that residual US and UN troops proved unable to handle."⁴⁷ This resurgence of violence then led to an escalation in the United Nations and United States response. Following the attack on a Pakistani contingent in which 24 peacekeepers died, both UNOSOM II and the remaining US Quick Reaction Force essentially became parties to the conflict. With their attempts to hunt General Aidid the United Nations, in the eyes of the Somalis, lost its neutral role.

There was a failure to recognize the impact that the involvement of the international community was having on the conflict in Somalia. It was assumed that, as in traditional peacekeeping missions, the insertion of forces would simply halt hostilities, enable the delivery of aid, and eventually resolve the crisis. It was for the most part a failure to recognize the very unique circumstances of the Somali case. While for the most part

UN peacekeeping missions can restore order for a time, and in limited areas they cannot tackle the source of the disorder, which is political and requires a political solution. The international community has been treating symptoms, not causes, he continues, because peacekeeping focuses on stopping conflict, not remedying the underlying causes of it. Moreover, the current system allows economic and humanitarian aid to fall into the hands of those who serve to perpetuate the situation. The aid that is donated is too easily routed away from those who most need it by corrupt officials, street gangs, or warlords.⁴⁸

Both the United Nations and United States failed to recognize that “even the most limited and seemingly neutral of non-military objectives, such as providing humanitarian relief, may be perceived as sharply biased by those vying for power on the ground.”⁴⁹ Although the interveners were claiming neutrality in their actions, the reality was that as soon as they became involved in the conflict they became a party to the conflict. The failure of the United Nations to recognize the importance of this meant that,

[w]hen the UN policy escalated to include the disarming of various factions to facilitate relief efforts, the policy jeopardized the United Nations’ neutral role. Unless all factions were disarmed simultaneously and in equal measure, observers warned correctly, the United Nations would upset the balance of power and be perceived as another belligerent in the divisive struggle.⁵⁰

The involvement of the warlords in the peace negotiations was also problematic as there were legitimate fears that “clans and factions which gain control over a central government will use it to accrue economic resources at the expense of others, and to wield the law, patronage politics and a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence to dominate the rest.”⁵¹

The failure of all the international actors involved in the Somali conflict to deal with the underlying causes has led to the current situation where “ongoing fighting, a barely humane existence, and complete lack of governmental control define life for the Somali people, with no clear end in sight.”⁵² In fact

in many respects “a case can be made that attempts to revive a central state structure have actually exacerbated armed conflicts”⁵³ by failing to deal with the underlying causes and the reality that for many Somalis a central state represents abuse of power and corruption.

The next section of this chapter will go on to examine the key failings of the United Nations in the conflict in Somalia and the ways in which these have directly contributed to the globalization of the conflict.

Failures and lessons to be learned

The first key failure on behalf of the United Nations was the failure to recognize and deal with the root causes of the conflict. The United Nations failed to recognize that “all conflicts have underlying causes and almost all have possible solutions. More often than not the greatest determinant of a successful outcome to any involvement will be whether key decision makers can take the time to understand the causes, and have the political will to vigorously pursue a solution.”⁵⁴ By not examining the root causes of the conflict in Somalia and the total collapse of the central government, the United Nations actively contributed to the globalization of the conflict; by leaving the country open to exploitation by various other actors including the parties involved in the conflict. The problems within Somalia were symptomatic of a greater problem within UN peacekeeping, the failure to tackle the causes of disorder. In ongoing conflicts,

the international response has been to insert non-participatory and non-accountable institutions of conventional relief, along with armed protection. Political distance has been achieved by defining this form of humanitarianism as the only possible type of intervention. But military humanitarianism, distrustful of indigenous political relations and institutions, cannot provide a long-term solution. The manner in which internal wars are fought dictates that emergency assistance cannot help but affect the dynamics of the conflict.⁵⁵

The reality was that “the international community could not impose a solution on the Somalis”⁵⁶ and therefore made no effort to try and broker a solution which might have prevented the escalation of the conflict. Because “the UN cannot impose peace, since the UN does not have the capacity to conduct real enforcement”⁵⁷ the organization therefore tried to remain neutral while operating in an ongoing conflict. This attempt to remain neutral was another failing on the part of the United Nations as “it is impossible to be neutral

within the logic of internal war, a war whose destructive consequences are aimed precisely at disrupting the lives of the people whom humanitarian aid seeks to sustain.”⁵⁸

The organization and its member states did not want to become embroiled in the complex task of rebuilding the Somali state, and thus they in many ways sustained the ongoing conflict. The first and perhaps the most important lesson stemming from this is that intervention in unresolved conflicts with short-term goals will not lead to a successful early termination of the conflict. The organization needs to make sure that there is commitment from its member states to stay the course and if this is not the case then UN forces should not be introduced.⁵⁹ It was clear, “[i]n the case of Somalia, that it could not be honestly said that an agreement between the parties in Mogadishu provided a durable basis for peacekeeping nor that they had both consented to the UN operation nor that the troops’ mandate was clearly defined and practicable.”⁶⁰

The failure to provide adequate support for the operation directly led to the escalation of the conflict, the attacks on the UNOSOM II troops, and the perception that the United Nations was becoming another party to the conflict. This not only had negative consequences for the UN troops in Somalia but also for the organization as a whole. Unfortunately,

[t]he resulting setback had a knock-on effect. Successful peacekeeping depends critically on the parties to the conflict having respect for and confidence in the United Nations. The humiliation and ineffectiveness of UN troops in Somalia—and, at about the same time, in Bosnia—undermined their credibility in other theatres. “Welcome to Mogadishu” was the banner held aloft by demonstrators on the quayside in Port-au-Prince who succeeded in turning away a US Navy ship that was to land the advance party of a new peacekeeping operation in Haiti.⁶¹

In Somalia the United Nations also became involved in wider range of activities than it was used to undertaking. However, “the implications of the United Nations’ move into peacebuilding are too often overlooked. Peacebuilding takes the United Nations into territory unexplored by UN practitioners and uncharted by UN strategists or scholars. Many of its peacebuilding tasks cast the United Nations in entirely new roles.”⁶² These are roles which the organization is ill-equipped to undertake. The United Nations is reliant on its member states for the resources to undertake these missions and if the resources are not provided it should be made clear that the United Nations will not attempt to undertake the mission. If it does continue to undertake these kinds of missions then,

[t]he implications are significant for the organization's credibility; only a perception of UN effectiveness will lead warring parties to seek the organization's counsel and member states to lend support to such operations. This question of capability guides oft-repeated concerns about the need for adequate financial and technical capacities for peacekeeping and peace-building operations. Attention to such issues is justified and important. But unfortunately, all of the technical capacity in the world will not create the necessary conditions for UN success in peace building.⁶³

The United Nations needs to learn that even the apparently neutral provision of humanitarian aid can have negative consequences on the development of a conflict. Aid in Somalia became a key factor in the ability of the warlords to sustain the violent conflict. There needs to be more care taken in the distribution, the control, and the supply of aid to ensure that it is not a factor in the continuation of conflicts. There cannot be a humanitarian intervention of any kind without paying attention to the impact this will have on the political situation.

Within Somalia there was very little attempt made to address the political issues. The focus remained purely on the distribution of humanitarian aid. However, the aid being distributed was a key factor in the continuation of the conflict. It was being utilized by parties to the conflict to gain power and influence and the inability of the United Nations to prevent that only further complicated the situation as aid agencies were then forced to provide their own private security. The continuing role of the aid agencies, and their need to negotiate access only further cemented the position of the warlords as influential figures, with no central authority to override them. In Somalia this was a clear example of the ways in which "[t]he enhanced role of NGOs in the South is a practical manifestation of the challenge to sovereignty which has emerged. NGO involvement in Africa's internal wars has had the effect of bypassing local states and bringing the plight of civilians directly into the international arena."⁶⁴ Although the NGOs operating were not directly bypassing the state, as there was no state in existence, they were a clear demonstration of the failures of the United Nations to properly manage the situation in Somalia.

Coordination within Somalia was also a large problem for the United Nations, "where humanitarian operations are concerned there are even more actors on stage, including many agencies within the wider UN system and an enormous number of NGOs."⁶⁵ All of these agencies were having a direct impact on the conflict through the provision of aid yet there was no real means in place to coordinate or minimize that impact. As there was no central state it was

essentially a free-for-all for NGOs and the warring parties to do as they pleased with no focus on the long-term effects. This is partly due to the fact that,

[t]he UN deals with the most urgent problems at a certain time, given its limited resources and the inherent tendency of organizations to have short-range planning and attention. Once a crisis abates, UN members and the international media tend to turn away from it. Accordingly, the diplomatic efforts and resources needed to ensure long-term stability are often not present.⁶⁶

The failure to plan for the long-term stability and development of Somalia has directly contributed to the situation within the state today.

Within Somalia there was a failure to recognize that the focus on the humanitarian mandate as the only problem was detrimental to the development of any kind of political response. The lack of a central authority meant that there was little in the way of economic development for the Somali state, Somalia was completely dependent on foreign aid and in 1991 the state owed \$2 billion or 360 percent of GDP in foreign loans.⁶⁷ This meant that any development was within the control of the warlords as “[m]ajor forms of economic activity were cross-border smuggling, extortion and protection rackets, looting and qat trading. These have provided the funds for the militia forces of the warlords.”⁶⁸ The failure of the United Nations to prevent this has meant that the economy within Somalia has remained dependant on the influx of aid which is easily manipulated by the warlords. It has also meant that focus on development has remained based on the illegal black market, where in Somalia today businessman are continuing to pay their own militias to ensure the success of their businesses.

Following the intervention in Somalia it was argued that “the nature of the threats to peace and of conflict assumed characteristics for which the founders of the UN had not planned and with which the UN was not well prepared to deal;”⁶⁹ that “the UN cannot impose peace, since the UN does not have the capacity to conduct real enforcement.”⁷⁰ This, however, is not the case, the problems in Somalia stemmed from the inability of the UN member states to provide the resources necessary for the mission to be a success. The reality is that “if member states, collectively, are not prepared to fund a programme, the Security Council should not include it within the mandate of the mission.”⁷¹ Unfortunately this is not the way things have worked in the past, nor is it how they currently work today meaning that in most cases, for the United Nations to intervene successfully “peace should be ensured before assistance can be provided.”⁷² The United Nations as an organization is not capable of intervening in ongoing conflicts. It does not have the power,

the resources, or the influence to be successful in peacebuilding and this is clearly demonstrated by “the current failures of UN peace operations as well as development assistance to stop, let alone provide long-term solutions for situations that lead to massive destruction of human life.”⁷³ The inability to deal with the ongoing conflict was in part due to the failure of the Security Council to provide a clear and achievable mandate for each UN intervention. UNOSOM II was a clear example of the ways in which “the functions and mandate of a peacekeeping force are affected by the nature of the conflict” and the reality that “if a force is given a mandate unsuited to the type of conflict in which it is positioned it will be unable to achieve its purposes.”⁷⁴

In Somalia there was also a failure to understand the causes of the conflict along with the ways in which Somali society functioned. With every intervention it is important that the root causes be addressed, but also that they be addressed in a way that suits the state which is being intervened in. The United Nations failed to do this in a number of ways, it ignored the importance which clan ties played in Somali society and the connections this had with the ongoing conflict. Although the intervention had

... enabled relief food for the hungry to be delivered in the short run, it also has expanded the pervasive image of Somalia as a barbarian nation and led to long term problems that have exacerbated human survival, freedom, and Self-determination. However, this approach offers no answer to the following question: Since the lineage system has been part of Somali social organization for centuries, why has this society not engaged in nihilistic fratricide before? Surely, there must have been power-seeking individuals in the past?⁷⁵

Because of the failure to address this, the United Nations also failed to engage alternative leaders to the warlords who might have been able to broker a political resolution to the conflict. The failure to understand the root causes of the conflict was not a continuous problem throughout the UN intervention. During the first UNOSOM mission when Mohammed Sahnoun was the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) he made great strides toward creating cooperation between the United Nations and the parties involved in the conflict. He had a clear understanding of the way in which Somali society operated and how this could be utilized to help reduce the level of conflict. One of the biggest failures on behalf of the United Nations was the failure to recognize the important role he played, and how key his knowledge of the society was. Unfortunately he resigned his position after Resolution 775 increased the number of troops to be deployed without consultation with the parties on the ground. This had a massive impact on the way in which the

United Nations was viewed by the warring parties and directly contributed to the difficult position which the organization then found itself in.

Somalia was also seen by some within the UN system as a test case for the new multilateralism being lauded in the post-Cold War era. It was felt by many that "an era might be dawning in which Western governments, freed from the constraints of the cold war, would use their armies to save strangers in places far away from home."⁷⁶ The Secretary General at the time was keen to establish a new role for the United Nations, one which went much further than traditional peacekeeping. With UNOSOM II the United Nations was attempting to reconstitute the state of Somalia, using it as a test case for the United Nations new role as a peacebuilder. Through this new role the United Nations would authorize operations which were

[d]esigned to address the root causes of conflict, it entails building the political conditions for a sustainable, democratic peace, generally in countries long divided by social strife, rather than keeping or enforcing peace between hostile states or armed parties. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has called this new brand of UN peacekeeping post-conflict peace building.⁷⁷

The problem with the intervention in Somalia was that it was not a post-conflict society. The conflict was ongoing and the parties involved still had everything to fight for.

The intervention of the United Nations and the complete failure to deal with the political situation in Somalia directly contributed to the globalization of the conflict and the impact it is now having both regionally and internationally. The initial failure of the United Nations to manage the distribution of aid and their inclusion of the warlords in any peace negotiations essentially legitimized the actions of the warlords as a political force with a justifiable complaint. This undermined any potential there was for a political resolution to the crisis as did the inability to understand the root causes of the conflict.

Conclusion

The intervention in Somalia was one of the United Nations largest ever failures. The complete withdrawal of troops in March 1995 left the Somali state to its disintegration with only the intervention of NGOs providing humanitarian aid to sustain it. The United Nations actively contributed to globalizing the conflict in Somalia in a variety of ways, its complete failure to deal with the political situation and insistence on focusing purely on humanitarian intervention

allowed the state to fail completely. By intervening without the consent of the government and by designating Somalia a state without a government capable of giving consent the United Nations in effect stripped Somalia of its sovereignty. Sovereignty has traditionally been founded on territorial control and the right of nonintervention, the United Nations by intervening clearly demonstrated that Somalia possessed neither of these, and was in essence a completely failed state. The dire situation within Somalia was further exacerbated by the United Nations failure to deal with the underlying structural and political issues. By engaging with the warlords to ensure the delivery of aid the United Nations and other actors only encouraged the spread of conflict and the establishment of a thriving aid-based and black market economy. In essence they became a party to the conflict, losing their neutrality and only serving to perpetuate the conflict by providing resources which were then manipulated by the multitude of armed groups operating within Somalia.

By failing to control the flow of aid the United Nations enabled the creation of this aid-based economy and essentially encouraged the failure to develop any kind of sustainable economy. This, it can be argued, has directly contributed to the development in Somalia of alternative means of employment, including the increase in piracy off the coast which is causing increasing difficulties on an international scale and has led to the creation of a number of multilateral coalitions to attempt to combat it, including NATO's "Operation Ocean Shield," the EU's NAVFOR Somalia (Operation Atalanta), and the United Kingdom's Combined Task Force (CTF) 151. Piracy gained headlines in 2008 when the number of attacks and the size of requested ransoms increased dramatically. This increase has been connected to the continued lawlessness and poverty within Somalia, the huge financial rewards from piracy, coupled with the number of relatively risk-free opportunities for carrying out the attacks.⁷⁸

The failure to reconstitute the Somali state has also left its territory open to abuse which is clearly demonstrated by both the increase in piracy and the terrorist attacks perpetrated in neighboring Kenya. Somalia has not become a base for terrorist groups, who much prefer the protection of failing states rather than the chaos of a completely failed one. It does, however, provide a very convenient location for the smuggling of weapons and other components which have been utilized in terrorist attacks. This has once again brought Somalia to the attention of the international community but again there has been no move made to address the underlying problems. The situation in Somalia has also led to a large-scale refugee problem, one which is spilling over into neighboring states who are little able to handle the influx of destitute people.

Somalia is a unique demonstration of how both the failure to intervene and the wrong type of intervention can exacerbate the deterioration of an already unstable country. It is a demonstration of the need for greater control

in undertaking interventions and the need to address the political as well as the humanitarian issues which underpin large-scale conflicts and civil wars. Somalia has also become the focus of interest in how large-scale forces, economic globalization, the war on terror, and the influence of new actors are impacting on the role of the state. It has also become a unique example of investigating whether or not it is possible for a state to function without a government.

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2

Contextual disconnect: The failure of the “international community” in Somalia

Karl Sandstrom

Introduction—learning to carry your own baggage

The interaction between global and local in Somalia has produced a number of shared histories that have influenced not only its multiple developing social contexts, but also how the outside is perceived and reacted to. Failing to understand what these images are and how they have been, and are, being produced indicates a fatal arrogance on the part of the “international community” as it continues to seek the shaping of a Somali state according to the wishes of its strongest members. The perception of the international effort is that of a system of component interests and actors who see themselves as politically and historically detached from the context with which they engage and as having little negative impact. The aid and development strategies seem intensely reluctant to engage constructively with the prevailing Somali sociopolitical structures. Failure to think through the likely consequences of actions allows aid projects to exacerbate localized conflicts produced in the clash between the survival strategies of competing interest groups. In addition, the “peacekeeping” forces, a term that conjures up images of impartiality and local consent, are conducting offensive operations and a counter-piracy

naval task force make up part of the globalized presence in Somalia. Like the preceding international involvements, the peacekeeping and counter-piracy missions separate interdependent issues and build the image of the Somali context as a problem disconnected from other circumstances. In reality the “peacekeeping” force is a support force for the externally generated and installed government; and the naval task force protects international vessels from a Somali piracy threat while the issues of illegal fishing fleets in Somali waters or alleged toxic dumping are topics avoided despite their possible impact on livelihood opportunities in the coastal regions. This relationship is typical of how global interests interact with not just Somalia, but also in other environments into which they reach.¹ The state-centric and global trade perspective shared by global actors produces distinctly different priorities from those held locally while at the same time trying to prescribe “solutions.” It is not about solving the issues of and in the local context, but that the local becomes a problem to outside interests and must therefore be “corrected.” While causes of social conflicts and violence are largely found within the Somali context, the focus of the international actors indicates a substantial failure to understand social and political modes of mobilization as well as exactly how localized these issues are even when tangled in global discourses. The international interventions in the early 1990s, the internationally backed Ethiopian invasion in 2006, and at the time of writing the ongoing Kenyan and Ethiopian invasion only strengthen this impression. A simplistic narrative and problem-definition allows for simple “solutions,” but in reality sets the effort up for further long-term failures despite perceived or claimed short-term successes.

This chapter is informed by literature as well as fieldwork in Somaliland and explores some of the aspects of the Somali social and conflict context. Central to the chapter is a discussion of modes of social mobilization in Somalia and the relationship between international interventionist efforts and the local context. A final discussion addresses some options available for constructive engagement. It finds that, in order to make any progress, the international actors must understand not only the Somali context but also their own role and the shared histories of the global and the local. They must find a way to carry the baggage they brought to, and have created in, Somalia themselves.

Social modes of mobilization in Somalia

Political and social mobilization in Somalia occurs predominantly locally along subclan lines, as do settlement patterns both in the rural and urban areas.² By extension this is also the case for resource distribution, access, control, and

security. In a context of decades of war and destruction, trust is in short supply, peace is fragile, and the sizes of sustainable social identity—and solidarity—groups come in “small” only. Interest group formations are focused mainly on a local level pursuing local agendas in a narrowly defined context dominated by, though not exclusively, subjectively defined survival and security needs. Conflict is largely generated at this level as well, meaning that any larger ideological project such as state formation or, in the Somali context, an Islamist insurgency, easily finds itself subverted and co-opted by highly political local agendas. While these will feed into and reenforce the larger conflict, the ideological projects conversely represent a resource opportunity for affecting local dynamics. Thus the motivation for siding with a specific social force may range between established patterns of subclan mobilization, via pragmatic force enhancement and capacity to enforce order and provide security, to actual ideological conviction. But if the latter is a small minority of the accumulated networks of subinterests and local actors involved in a society-wide struggle, a “resolution” of only that wider conflict does not in fact resolve the diverse incentives of the majority to continue their local conflicts. It merely transforms the conflict incentives and dynamics, not necessarily for the better. If framed as a zero-sum control over state resources, the conflict could even transform into existential conflict rather than a pursuit of limited interests.

The subclan is the predominant social organizational form in Somalia and is traced through the male lineage.³ Other types of alliances occur but are often temporary and influenced by sub-clan affiliation or, for example, intermarriage. Alliance building is often a direct response to immediate circumstances⁴ rather than long-term strategizing. This said, the subclan is not necessarily cohesive but subject to internal competition as well. The core of the solidarity group in Somali society is the *Diya* group. This represents immediate protection and insurance, and is where the individual is held accountable in the end. The different levels of identity are readily used for wider mobilization in response to perceived outside threats. The *Isaaq* clan-family in the North united against Barre but is dominated by three different subclans who are in open competition with each other. Settlement also occurs along subclan lines in both rural and urban settings. This is the case in Hargeisa, but also in Mogadishu, where there is a division between pastoralists and craftsmen, different parts of the city, and different lineages.⁵ Urbanization in Hargeisa is tentative at best and most people will if necessary take their things and move to rural areas also controlled by their subclan at the first serious signs of conflict. As one respondent expressed it, “people came together in the cities of the strong state because the state could replace the clan [for security]. When the state failed, people moved back to their clan areas.”⁶ As Schultz and Dew observe,⁷ political allegiance and identity starts with the immediate family, then the

immediate lineage, and then the clan family. This pattern of mobilization was evident in the resurgence of violence in Somaliland during the 1990's⁸ and continues to have a political role in all of Somalia.

Businessmen have both traditionally and more recently shown a capacity for temporary cross-cutting alliances to influence the political or security situation. In Somaliland they have contributed to the costs of peace processes⁹ and pushed for peace as well as provided channels of communication between warring clans.¹⁰ In the South they have among other things hired militiamen for protection also seen as a bid to demobilize nongovernmental militias.¹¹ It is likely that the role of the businessmen is linked to a convergence of interests relating to business and the channels of communication, even with the enemy, that the trade patterns produce. In 1999 leading Mogadishu businessmen decided to stop paying taxes to warlords and to support the *Shari'ica* courts of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) for increased stability.¹² The *Shari'ica* courts of the ICU were exceptional in that they maintained an enforcement capacity and enjoyed popular support largely because of their ability to create an element of security.¹³ Though their Islamist agenda gave the *Sheikhs* a greater power than is traditionally the case, the ICU drew their cohesion and mobilization capacity mainly from their *Hawiye* kinship ties.¹⁴ The sociopolitical structures of the subclan carry an influence in all types of social mobilization. The foundations of the individual courts were most often a coalition of clan elders, intellectuals, businessmen, and Sheikhs. The pastoral tradition of Somalia has imbued society with a pragmatic outlook on situational logics as a matter of survival and Islam has been a "veil lightly worn."¹⁵

Religion is nevertheless an omnipresent feature and Somalia is a distinctly Sunni Muslim society. Most Somali respondents brought up religion as a primary source of identity but Islam has never been a truly sustainable political rallying point in Somalia. It has been used to mobilize against non-Muslim threats but it is questionable whether it is sustainable as a cross-clan mobilizer in its own right and without a common threat. There is no common widespread deeply ideological, political, and radical Islamism, and the southern Islamist networks are instead comprised of multiple groups with diverse interests and modes of mobilization. Their popularity and following is more likely to be the result of a series of responses to the situation than a coherent ideological conviction. Foreign extreme Islamist elements are establishing themselves but this has reportedly led to fallouts and disunity over their role and influence.¹⁶ At the same time, the establishment of Wahhabi madrasas in Hargeisa, allegedly financed by Saudi money, has caused concerns over potential radicalization among some Somaliland politicians.¹⁷ The pragmatic and fickle approach to alliances, clannism, and the ability to draw outsiders into local issues are factors that present disincentives for international

Jihadist groups to establish themselves properly and permanently¹⁸ and works in a similar fashion for other ideological projects such as internationally controlled state- and peacebuilding. However, in the longer term the presence of radical madrasas could change the social conditions to facilitate ideological change.

The conflict between the TFG and ICU in 2006 is easily translated into clan terms. The TFG was led by Abdillahi Yusuf, like Barre a *Darod* clan member and from the Puntland area, whereas the ICU was predominantly *Hawiye* and, according to Lewis,¹⁹ given cohesion precisely through kinship ties. The language of security allowed the TFG to label the *Hawiye* population of Mogadishu as Islamists and terrorists in the name of the so called “global war on terror,” thus bringing a global discourse, and resources, into an old and protracted local conflict. The now dominant Islamist group Al Shabaab, formerly a part of the ICU, has shown what Bruton calls²⁰ an “impressive strategic capacity” to exploit local conflicts in order to spread its influence in southern Somalia. It has displayed a capacity to recruit from a wider base²¹ but Bruton argues²² that the nonclan-based elements of more disciplined and indoctrinated fighters are but a small fraction of the movement itself. Both Al Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam are in reality alliances of convenience. Before the military setbacks in 2012 and a preceding reduction in popular support, Al Shabaab had little incentive to talk to the international community, something that was reflected in its increasing radicalization and alignment with Al Qaeda.²³ While links to Islamist extremist groups should not be underestimated, overstating and acting on assumptions of a strong Islamic ideological base or links to *Al Qaeda* can also alienate many Somali moderates who are on the Islamist side for pragmatic and solidarity reasons.²⁴ In 2010 Uganda was targeted by Al Shabaab in retaliation for its troop presence in the AU forces in the South²⁵ where the “peacekeepers” were also actively involved in the fighting.²⁶

In the South there are also non-Islamist religious networks like the *Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa* (ASWJ) that have managed not only to mobilize across subclans but also to organize and resist Al Shabaab for some time. The network consists of a collection of *Sufist* subclans that have been denounced and targeted as heretics by the Al Shabaab. They signed a treaty of cooperation with the government on 21 June 2009 but have been under sustained attack by Islamist groups. The alliance is defensive in nature and can be seen as the result of converging survival interests triggered by coming under threat from the Islamists. It may thus not have been a decision driven by support for the government or the state as much as geographically close social agents being provided with a strong incentive to temporarily unite in response to an external physical and existential threat. In order to further improve its

capacities to resist the Islamist networks, it aligned with the state. It remains to be seen how strong that bond is when Al Shabaab no longer poses a threat to the subclans of ASWJ. There has already been some fragmentation of the alliance and its relationship to the government in Mogadishu is increasingly questionable.²⁷

Another type of alliance that has displayed capacity for mobilization and influence is that of women. The gender-based division of labor in Somali society is supported by a male-oriented honour-code but there are an increased number of female breadwinners,²⁸ largely as a result of the long war. Respondents of both genders in Somaliland indicated during research that they believed that women needed to be included but that it needed a context-specific approach framed in a *Quranic* and traditional framework within which the debate on gender roles can be held.²⁹ The role of women in Somali society is complex. Women have a dual allegiance and are members of both their father's and husband's subclans. This has made it possible for them to act as messengers between clans in times of conflict and to exert a dual pressure,³⁰ but conversely also makes them subject to suspicion of possible treachery. During the civil war, women were sometimes killed on suspicion of being spies.³¹ Though women may seem completely without power, there are examples of them creating their own sites of resistance and influencing aspects of conflict. Several such examples can be found in the Somaliland peace conferences of the 1990s. Among the more prominent is the 1992 Sheekh conference where women who were excluded from the proceedings hung microphones through the windows to hear what was said and stood outside the conference until all issues had been addressed.³² It was, however, also the women that managed to stop the UN deployment to Somaliland in the early 1990s.

According to some observers, women mobilize across clans and there is a shared notion of being the "clan of women"³³ within which they can create their own political space spanning across societal fault-lines when needed. While it could be possible from a Westernized perspective to focus on structural inequalities and sometimes injustices in gender relations in Somaliland, there are indications of a changing social, political, and economic environment that perhaps should enjoy greater attention.

It is possible to mobilize larger cross-clan interest groups and if it is framed correctly there is social cohesion on some issues for temporary alliances. The perception of one alliance of a cluster of interest groups coming into being generates counter-alliances in response. Such is the case of the Islamists and Sufi in the South and such was the case for the *Hawiye*, *Darod*, and *Isaaq*, during the 1990s.³⁴ The primary social organizational form is, however, still the subclan and these types of alliances tend to form in response to specific

pressures. They are formations of convenience and when the external threat recedes it is likely that division along subclan lines will resurface as it did among the *Isaaq* in the North after the SNM victory in 1991.³⁵ It is nevertheless a temporary but common platform on which some negotiation or progress could possibly be made with the right types of incentives and support. The fluid nature of alliances also means shifting situational logics between different social agents.

Missing the point—international engagement with Somalia

Somalia has long been subject to involvement and interventions from its neighbors and from global powers. The country as it geographically looks today is the direct outcome of decisions made by colonial powers, a division that has managed to resist Somali-driven attempts to unify them through referendum as well as armed conflict. A heritage from colonial rule is the structural differences between the North and the South or, possibly, between Mogadishu and the rest of the country. In the northwest the British pursued a policy of indirect rule “lite” by incorporating elders in a hierarchical relationship in their communities.³⁶ This practice politicized and awarded an authority role to a leadership that in the social context had more of a representative or chairman role.³⁷ The British interests in the North of the Somali territories were linked to protecting sea trade routes and the acquisition of meat for their barracks in Aden rather than to control the territory while in the South, the Italians pursued a policy of social engineering including an education system and missionary work intended to prepare the territory for Italian settlement. In order to do so the traditional structures of social control and dominance had to be broken down and the Italian colonial power, much like Barre in the 1970s and 1980s, actively sought to undermine these structures³⁸ while at the same time relying on them to administer the territory. There is cause to question to what extent this campaign was successful beyond Mogadishu but the difference in social stability and coherence between the North and the South could possibly and partially be traced to the different approaches chosen by the respective colonial powers. There are also different perceptions of to what extent the respective policies of indirect rule changed the political role of the elders they employed and what the outcomes of this were, but in both the North and the South the introduction of a hierarchical relationship was certainly a change to the traditional consensus system of localized governance.³⁹

The current international involvement seems completely devoted to the view that the situation in Somalia can largely be solved from the top-down. Reminiscent of the social engineering of social distribution patterns and gender equality during Barre's regime, a realignment of values initiated in Mogadishu is to be pushed into the periphery that is the rest of the country. There are grassroots projects undertaken in local communities with varying agendas and success, but the political consultation and engagement is undertaken at a highly centralized and selective level. However, to build a cell-phone tower in Somalia requires giving shares and concessions to the subclan controlling the intended location.⁴⁰ An approval from "the state" has very little value when incentives are considered locally and because of long fragmentation and war, much of it against a state, trust is also in short supply. Any social solidarity group is therefore likely to be protecting collectively defined interests rather than a society-wide gain, making it harder to argue and impose centrally decided social reform. The "international community" insists on "reconstructing" a central state in Somalia seemingly based on the assumption that there was a stable central state with efficient authority projection across the country under Barre, but also because the "international community" has problems accepting any other model, however temporary. The central state that the international actors are trying to rebuild was, however, never really able to penetrate society other than through repression and, according to for example Menkhaus,⁴¹ it is questionable whether it had any real reach outside of Mogadishu. The need to control the development of the Somali situation seemingly runs deep and international manipulation can easily be traced in for example the article guaranteeing the "free market economy" that appears in the Somali protoconstitution of the Transitional Federal Charter (TFC). Very similar articles also appear in the Afghan and Kosovo constitutions. The similarities between the TFC and the Afghan and Kosovo constitutions are clear indicators that international guidance was very influential when all were written and that conformity to external expectations is demanded regardless of the conditions for it and the likelihood of a positive outcome. However, the notion of the Weberian Somali central state does not correspond with the prevailing modes of social mobilization at this time, nor is it likely to do so in the near future.⁴²

The Somali context is intensely political and constant interaction at a substate level through trade, war, and marriage has developed a keen and very real political skill at highly localized levels. Much like in Afghanistan, the Somalis are often able to run circles around international political technocrats who do not care to understand the social dynamic in the local context. There is also the baggage of previous experiences, though according to the United Nations and World Bank reconstruction program for Somalia (RDP) the two organizations bring a mix of "capacity, neutrality, credibility, and technical

expertise.”⁴³ This is a bold claim to make, especially for the United Nations, considering for example the July 1993 killing of up to 73 elders at a peace meeting in Mogadishu. While carried out by US forces, the attack was referred to by respondents in the North 16 years later as a UN action. If one puts this and other preceding events into context, the capacity to mobilize quickly and the anger displayed shortly after, in the so-called “Battle of Mogadishu,” are not so incomprehensible. Somali reactions are the result of a sequence of events in their own continued existence. Though observers tend to extract those isolated images that they prefer from the Somali context and timeline, the Somalis cannot. It is their local reality and it is continuous. The United Nations has also taken a political stance in the South which not only cast doubts over its claims to impartiality and credibility as a peacekeeper, it also casts the organization as party to the conflict. The notion of it being possible to compartmentalize the current engagement from its historical and social context is an indication of not having understood the operational environment. Even if well intended, any project initiated by the United Nations is starting from a distinctly less optimistic point than is acknowledged in strategy and policy. It is dependent on the contextually defined meaning and value of previous engagements that will in turn have a bearing on the likely and possible outcomes.

The RDP specifically mentions the resilience and social organization capacity of Somali society and advocates for a rule of law “drawing on the strengths of the existing traditional, Shari’a and secular systems.”⁴⁴ In reality, however, the programs seem more driven by assumptions and political agendas along ideological lines than a serious attempt to understand and build on local existing structures. One interviewed international who felt that adaptation was necessary bluntly admitted to projecting one image for the donors while doing something very different on the ground in order to be able to get anything done at all.⁴⁵ Practitioners also seemed to be subject to political pressure to pursue certain objectives and prioritize not so much to the actual situation but to what is perceived as politically important in donor countries. A Somali respondent working closely with internationals noted that “ideas about the local needs are often donor-driven and lack connection with the local realities”⁴⁶ while an international worker described how projects corresponding to donor-driven value-bases were prioritized in selection for implementation.⁴⁷ Some of these projects seem to lack realistic time-scales and viability, but also stop short of analyzing potentially negative outcomes of seemingly well-intended projects. A Somali respondent observed that “[w]hen the “international community” gets involved there are conditions and demands that cause friction”⁴⁸ connecting with a claimed public notion that the “international community” is trying to corrupt local values and society.⁴⁹ This is seemingly supported by

the concerns of an international respondent that social mapping and capacity analysis was done at a minimum level and that projects were failing because donors insisted on imposing their will.⁵⁰

The lack of contextual understanding also generates conflict and environmental problems. The proliferation of mechanical wells and underground water deposits created to counter the water shortage has reduced nomadic movements, which in turn has increased deterioration of grazing land. The practice began already under colonial administration⁵¹ but continues today as “development.” Already scarce resources are thus made even scarcer by an attempt to counter the shortage of another resource. It has also led to a system of charging for access to water where not everyone is convinced that they should pay or understand why they are supposed to. One international worker explained how they build wells and then train some of the locally settled people to operate and manage them.⁵² These locals are then expected to charge for the use of those wells to pay for their upkeep and the salaries of the operators. To a pastoral nomad in the Somali context this may appear somewhat novel and hostile, especially if the well and enclosure is located on traditionally communal land. The propensity for geographical cluster settlements of subclans also means that a new well constitutes a shift in local power relationships through new avenues of resource control and distribution which may spark new conflicts. Projects addressing such illegal encroachment of land are rejected by some international organizations because of their complexity and viability in favor of projects corresponding better to a liberal value agenda. This type of consequence and outcome of benign projects with good intentions is a complex issue. A realistic consequence analysis requires substantial knowledge and understanding of the localized sociopolitical dynamics of where the project is to be located. A consequence analysis based on assumptions of universality and utilitarianism, disconnected from local conditions, is likely to have unexpected and probably negative outcomes. One plausible explanation for this is that the system of international donors, accountability, and political cycles seemingly condition projects and program designs to short-term and often short-sighted “solutions” to interlinked issues, treated in compartmentalized ways. The question seems to be “can we build a well here on your land” rather than “how would you feel if we built a well over there on your neighbour’s land.” By disregarding the sociopolitical dynamics and outcomes of projects in the local context, interventions generated in a macroscale understanding of “needs” thus serve to generate and perpetuate new conflicts rather than mitigate and address existing ones. This is a known issue,⁵³ yet it persists as a problem in implementation. Land-based conflicts are now considered the primary source of social conflict in for example Somaliland.⁵⁴

The external involvement on all sides in the South also provides opportunities for Somali communities there to engage international resources in what in reality are often local conflicts.⁵⁵ Thus Jihadist volunteers, American air strikes, Ethiopian and Kenyan troops, or other outside influences can be manipulated to play a role in local conflicts by employing the relevant discourse. The Ethiopian invasion in 2006 was a limited intervention with international backing in support of the TFG against the ICU and the intervention ended two years later with the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops. The results of the intervention were less than impressive. The chairman of the ICU was appointed president of the TFG; the Islamists of the Al Shabaab militia took over the temporary capital of Baidoa; and the United Nations mandated AU troops became increasingly involved in the war as an active party. The international ambition has been to generate peace and prosperity not only from the top-down but also very much from the outside, as manifested in a succession of internationally backed and failing governments with no empirical legitimacy and close to no territorial control or presence. It has created a situation where the *de facto* state of Somaliland, the autonomous region of Puntland, and multiple smaller polities have managed to function quite well during the internal war in primarily southern Somalia but gained no international recognition, thus largely excluding them from international loans and formal assistance. For example, while the international naval task force patrols the Gulf of Aden the Somaliland Coastguard is trying, and failing, to establish cooperative programs. The Coastguard had a personnel force of about 380 in 2009 with three boats and was severely under-armed compared to the pirates they engage. They also have an early warning system of watch-towers all along the Somaliland coastline manned by locals that reports unknown vessels or people move along the coast. They successfully captured and prosecuted 41 pirates between January and August 2009 with convictions of 15 years minimum. However, they receive almost nothing from the state budget and when they try to warn the international fleet of suspected vessels they are told to get off the communication channel.⁵⁶ Here is a source of intelligence, local knowledge, and untapped potential that covers the full extent of the coastline and which could provide advice as well as active support on land, close to the coast, and on the issues of prosecution and imprisonment of convicted pirates. Yet this is actively ignored, casting doubts on the sincerity of the "international community" and its commitment to finding local and sustainable solutions. The issue of continuing illegal fishing by several fleets in Somali waters also raises some questions. It exacerbates the impression that the international effort is more to serve external strategic and economic interests than to assist Somalia. It would require substantial arrogance to believe that this impression was lost on the Somalis.

There are also issues with the approaches and methods chosen by international organizations engaging in gender issues in the Somali context and several respondents argued that the strategies employed by external organizations were not adjusted to the Somaliland context. Ideas of local needs are often seen as donor-driven and lacking connection to the local reality. One (male) respondent described the exclusion of women from the decision-making process as “a contribution to retardation” but also saw the Western strategies as incompatible with local society.⁵⁷ The discursive practices by internationals in relation to gender relations are also somewhat problematic. Barre’s “Scientific Socialism” employed this discourse, which partly associated it with oppression and opposition to the traditional.⁵⁸ By employing the word “gender,” one invokes locally held connotations that provoke suspicion and wariness. There appears to be a common misconception in international strategies of women as separate from society or at the very least as a common group with permanent shared interests and, in the context of development, victims. This perspective completely ignores that women are a part of society sharing not only its norms and traditions, but also often the immediate interests of their own solidarity groups.⁵⁹ While women in Somaliland and Somalia can and have mobilized as cross-clan groups, it does not follow that it is possible to treat “womanhood” as a permanent primary interest group or “sixth clan” detached from the deeper social context. Somali women have long played a “vital role in facilitating communication, mobilizing resources, and applying informal pressure”⁶⁰ but the challenges issued and gains made have occurred within the existing structures rather than in contradiction of them. Somali women have forged their own avenues of communication and action within the prevailing social frameworks and in some cases been able to exact changes that have gained acceptance. There has been support for this from some donors and some legislation, but the method, approach, and objectives have been set by Somali organizations rather than an international “universal” agenda. In the realities of the scarce resources post- or active conflict context, “womanhood” does not in itself provide protection or food any more than being a man does, but women can mobilize to pursue specific interests. How they do it and for what aims is a decision they should make themselves as it is directly linked to the convergence of subjective interests. The role of women as tied in with, sometimes contradictory, clan interests is reflected on for example in a Somali-written UNICEF report on women’s rights in Islam.⁶¹ The discourse of international gender strategies can also be used as a way to access international resources in pursuit of the interests of the subclan rather than some common agenda of women in general.

The concept of “civil society” as used in international discourse is also interesting in relation to the state–society relations in Somalia. The concept as such is completely imported and many local NGO’s have, according to Schwoebel,⁶² been “clan-based” and “have incompletely understood the concept of civil society,” instead pursuing income-generation for themselves. They have thus been able to pragmatically subvert the intentions of the international funders through simple discourse adaptation to values and program outcomes desired by donors in order to access resources as part of a survival strategy or personal enrichment schemes. This is of course not always the case, but displays the ease with which manipulation can occur when facilitated by a stubborn refusal to engage and work with a local social reality as it stands rather than adhering to normative notions of “objectively” preexisting values and interest definitions.

Discrepancies between local realities and outside programs have provided ample opportunity for the misuse in different ways. For example the UNOSOM demobilization projects in South Somalia in the early 1990s were used by militia leaders to pay for housing and food for their fighters.⁶³ It is also true that the massive influx of aid and currency provided opportunities for positive situation development but the utilitarian implementation of such opportunities can certainly be questioned. These outcomes are thus largely unrelated to the specific projects and more to how local agents actualized and used the resources the projects represented, thus producing unintended outcomes rather than playing out according to a strategy. It would be ill-advised to view the population as a passive mass of disinterested victims without agency or the capacity to formulate and mobilize in support of their own specific interests. The Somali population has, in all parts of the country, demonstrated a capacity to generate multiple sites of resistance and co-optation within the boundaries set by the material, structural, and ideational conditions in relation both to rivaling and externally produced agendas and strategies. It is therefore imperative to understand how these interests are formed, pursued, and locally understood as well as when they converge or not with different ideological agendas. The same problem has been faced by international Islamist groups trying to establish a presence and influence in Somalia. The Somali brand and application of Islam have largely been in distinct conflict with a more political international Jihad. Regardless of the political branding in terms of Islamist jihad or liberal democracy there are locally formed interests and issues that have more immediacy than large-scale ideological agendas. External involvement is frowned upon and expectations of local benefits often tied in with acceptance⁶⁴ thus indicating a far more pragmatic than ideological social disposition.

Brokering a peace the Somali way—aggregate social pressures and consensus

An important foundation of reconciliation employed in the Somaliland peace processes in the 1990s was the principle of *Xalay dhalay*. The concept is used when costs and reparations are deemed incalculable⁶⁵ and instead of seeking compensation and perpetuating the conflict, an agreement is made to forfeit all claims in the interest of reaching a peace. This is directly linked to the concept of *Diya*, which can be translated as blood-payment within the customary legal framework of *xeer*.⁶⁶ The *Diya* solidarity-group has a great social impact in the absence of a capable state as it provides both insurance and security.

The Somaliland peace conferences in the 1990s represent a particularly interesting example of how the social pressures worked to influence political development and conflict. The situational logics facing the representatives were dynamically shaped and influenced both inside and outside of the conferences. The latter was made possible as social aggregate pressure was able to form in immediate proximity and direct response to issues being addressed.

One of the factors affecting the process of reconciliation is the traditional financing of peace conferences where one clan or group of clans will pay for the costs involved and host the conference. On occasion, for example in Borome in 1993, this has meant hundreds of people turning up and having to be fed which of course puts a strain on the economy and resources of the host clan. Through the tradition of reciprocation it is understood that the next meeting will be hosted by the opponents and there is thus an economic incentive created for progress and closure and a strong disincentive for unnecessarily prolonging the conferences. Nevertheless the principle of consensus means that these conferences will often take a long time, sometimes several months.

Another factor that was mentioned in interviews was the proximity pressure. Peace conferences are open to all men and, increasingly, to women. This means that an aggregate social pressure is generated as large numbers of people will travel to the conferences to make their voices heard. In addition to this, the peace conferences were held incrementally with small bilateral meetings preparing the way for larger conferences.⁶⁷ Local conflicts and grievances between subclans that threatened coherence and stability were identified and addressed individually under an explicit prohibition of discussing national issues. By gradually solving local differences it was possible to eventually hold national conferences that were not derailed by interests and animosities generated in these smaller conflicts,⁶⁸ reflecting, as Walls observes,⁶⁹ the pragmatic norms present in much of Somali society.

The case of the “international community” as an external peacemaker is interesting as a contrast to the Somaliland experiences. Somaliland elders initially decided to allow UN troops during the early 1990s UN intervention but they were pressured and swayed to change this decision by women who had mobilized in opposition. The policies and operations in the South under the UN flag are likely to have strengthened the resolve in the North that it would be better to deal with their problems without foreign intervention. In a discussion about the possible UN presence an elder reportedly asked what clan UNOSOM represented⁷⁰ illustrating that politics are indeed not only local but directly tied in with the sociopolitical frames of reference. It is worth reflecting on these factors in relation to the international conferences arranged in order to address the conflict in the South. Apart from crucial conflict parties not being invited, the conferences have been held outside of Somalia at the expense of the “international community” and away from the social pressure of proximity and participation or presence. The incentives in Somali peacemaking for closure and agreements have thus been removed. It seems there has been an assumption on the part of the “international community” that there is a common interest in an objective notion of “peace” and that this could be sought in a created and controlled environment, an assumption that largely ignores the historical and regional contexts shaping Somali social influences. The conflict mitigation systems of the prevailing social organizational forms have quite clear functions and mechanisms that are directly relatable to socially shared legitimacy and authority. More importantly, the notion of the externally generated peace brought by “impartial” mediators and representatives from neighboring countries or the United Nations and other organizations in the system completely ignores, and perhaps completely denies, the long-shared history of involvement, political games, and manipulation that the Somalis have seen in their country. In particular, perhaps the more recent shared histories of the 1990s and the internationally supported Ethiopian invasion in 2006 should be considered as factors that may have wider sociopolitical ramifications and thus implications for how the “international community” can engage in the multiple Somali realities. The United Nations in particular carries a large baggage from its early 1990s operations in the South, a baggage that affects its credibility and trust in Somalia today. Apart from the lives and resources lost without restitution in line with the *Diya* principle, the involvement of then Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was seen as a direct continuation of long-running Egyptian interests in Somalia as he had served as Deputy Foreign minister in Egypt between 1977 and 1991.⁷¹ The United States has supported different factions of militias and subclans in their war on terror as well as carried out direct air strikes. Considering the ease with which Somali interest groups have been able to manipulate all external comers over the years, it should come as little surprise that accusations of severely

mistaken targeting have surfaced.⁷² Whether the result of poor intelligence and an overreliance on local “allies,” or indeed actually correct targeting, the effect in relation to the subclans and networks to which the targeted individuals belong is likely to be similar. By allowing international economic or military resources to be utilized by locally oriented actors, a distinct impression is generated that sides have been taken, often in a local dispute largely removed from any agenda of international terrorism.

While Mogadishu was abandoned by the Islamist insurgents of Al Shabaab in August 2011⁷³ and both Kenya⁷⁴ and Ethiopia⁷⁵ invaded the country in support of the international forces from the AU, government control is negligible. A series of offensives by AU, Ethiopian, and Kenyan troops managed to drive Al Shabaab out of Mogadishu as well as their other larger strongholds,⁷⁶ but as Al Shabaab withdrew a scramble for local control reportedly emerged among the progovernment militias.⁷⁷ Substate conflicts and substate interest formations will likely continue to be the center of gravity for social interaction for the foreseeable future. It is, however, unlikely that interventionist policy will recognize this and plan accordingly, thus risking a reversion to the disorder under warlord rule that originally drove the emergence of the ICU in popular response. With the retreat of Al Shabaab and spread of government forces into new and larger areas, there is also a risk of escalating internal fighting as predatory behavior by official units or subclan militias come to the fore, a problem already emerging at the time of writing in late 2012, according to some reports.⁷⁸ With the shared threat of Al Shabaab reduced or even eliminated, other sub-conflicts can yet again be given room.

Stone by stone—options and reflections

The Cold War proxy arming of the 1980s was replaced by good intentions but badly misdirected humanitarian and political interventions in the 1990s, followed by a continuation of policies disconnected from the local reality. There is no doubt that there are individuals and organizations out there that may “get it” but systemically, as the aggregate production and outcome of the agents and actors involved, it is a failure even given the military progress seen in late 2012. Military progress is in itself, however, not a foundation for sustainable solutions. While it may facilitate a window of opportunity, an engagement that continues to ignore locally relevant issues in favor of a mainly state-centric solution with a limited range of stake-holders, are likely to fail.

Somali society largely consists of strong interest groups within a proud people living in a very acute society-wide logic of survival brought on by decades of war, displacement, and natural disasters. This limits the available

social responses but some short-term actions can at least be explored in order to start building a platform for a, much later, consensus.

Peaceful and relatively ordered areas must be protected and supported through locally defined and relevant measures. The highly local politics and fragmented nature of Somali society has to be understood and worked with at a highly localized level. Somalis may not be fully trained in Western political frameworks but they are certainly experts in their own. The myth of the Somali central state in Mogadishu as any type of solution in the near future must be dispelled. While it can be kept as the juridical representative the international system craves, any actual measures must be locally anchored, approved, and implemented. The state is a site of competition between social forces or clusters of interest groups but also outside interests that all interact in a high-stress environment. This does not automatically translate into parliamentary political contest. The focus on the central state is, as was the case in early Somaliland state-building, a site of contestation where local conflicts are continued and reenacted. To build a peace and a legitimate state in Somalia will be a very long-term and difficult process. It needs to respond to and deal with local grievances before addressing national issues and it needs to treat international norms as normative goals rather than universal and immediately attainable "facts." Top-down approaches do not seem to work whether they are labeled scientific socialism, liberal democracy, or Wahhabi Islamism. In an operational environment with this degree of fragmentation it seems necessary to understand the context at an extremely low level and work slowly. That does not mean community projects and workshops aiming to "educate" the local population on what they "should want" according to external frames of understanding, but to facilitate the actual formulation of local issues, grievances, and frameworks for solutions.

The problem is today framed as completely on the Somali end conveniently ignoring the shared histories produced in different types of interventionist projects and the outcomes of these. Illegal fishing by international fleets is apparently not a problem but piracy perpetrated in part by former fishermen is. The conflict in the South is framed as a conflict between the state and Islamist groups, which is a gross over-simplification of reality. The "international community" seems dedicated to treating Somalia in the usual compartmentalized way. It will not understand the social dynamics but will project its own definitions onto it; it will not acknowledge or understand the baggage it has created but frame it as a purely Somali problem with international ramifications; it will not learn from where Somalis have been successful in Somalia but impose structures and instead "teach" Somalis how to act and negotiate peace. The only successful areas seem to be the ones that refused or were denied an international presence.

The issues facing Somalia cannot be overcome from the outside or from above. The social divisions and fissure-lines run deep and it will take dedicated and highly local manoeuvring to even begin addressing this. It took the very motivated and much smaller population in the North, dominated by one clan-family and three competing subclans, six years to overcome their most incendiary issues. They suffered multiple relapses into armed conflict and are still subject to the occasional local violent confrontations. The task in the South is daunting, but by framing it in terms of a state issue or an country-wide ideological struggle the “international community” is not only fooling itself, but it is also making itself subject to being used in the locally generated disputes it conveniently ignores.

The “international community” also needs to come to terms with, acknowledge, and seek to address its own role as a warring party in Somalia since the early 1990s even if it does not correspond to the righteous self-image of “good intentions.” The different types of international interests and organizations involved in Somalia have got to acknowledge that, whether they are providing food, healthcare, or air strikes, they are intervening in a preexisting, highly localized, sociopolitical context. They are engaging not as detached outsiders but as part of that context, subject to its dynamics, and also having political effects through their interaction whether at the state- or the village level. Unfortunately for Somalia the political will to do this is lacking and it is in the end easier to live in an imaginary world and continue throwing money at repeating failed strategies in a largely futile attempt to contain the “Somali problem,” than it is to see one’s own role and truly move beyond technocratic “one-size-fits-all” solutions. The political fall-out of dealing with issues of statehood, engaging with groups labeled “terrorists” as a blanket description, or the huge economic interests of nations with a suspiciously flourishing fishing industry is far more uncomfortable than actually dealing with the issues produced in Somalia. In a space where global has long met local in an increasingly deadly downward spiral and where local is now increasingly going global through terrorism, radicalization and, though currently in seeming decline, piracy; the very issues the interventions were intended to stop. This contextual disconnect raises the questions of what the price will be in the end for a continued failure to get it right. The steepest price is at any rate likely to continue to be paid by the Somalis.

Notes

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SECTION TWO

The rise of the transnational

3

Is all jihad local? Transnational contention and political violence in Somalia

Peter S. Henne

The attempted bombing of a US airliner on Christmas Day 2009 was an almost textbook case of the globalization of contemporary political issues. The perpetrator was a Nigerian who had ties with Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, a Yemen-based Al-Qaeda franchise. In response to the threat of US military actions in retaliation, Al Shabaab—a Somali extremist group affiliated to Al-Qaeda—announced it would send fighters to Yemen and called on Muslims to support Al-Qaeda’s efforts against the United States. That an attempted terrorist attack in the United States would have ramifications in the country of origin is not surprising. The fact that a violent Islamist group in Somalia would also become involved in the response to this attack—if only rhetorically—is surprising, however, and calls for further analysis of the extent to which the conflict in Somalia has become globalized.

Globalization is a complex phenomenon that brings together geographically separate societies, giving local issues a global salience while simultaneously making global issues local concerns.¹ It involves numerous elements, including cultural, political, and economic forces. In the context of the conflict in Somalia, a particularly relevant aspect of globalization is the extent to which conflict in a country can be said to constitute “transnational contention,” which Sidney Tarrow defines as a “set of identifiable processes and mechanisms that intersect with domestic politics to produce new” forms of contention.² The broader process of globalization, then, includes the specific set of interactions between local and global actors that can affect political contention, or the

manner through which local groups advance claims against the state.³ Changes in local politics as a result of transnational influences can have significant ramifications on political contention, including strengthening certain actors and altering the tactics and goals of groups. When political contention is violent in nature—as in civil wars or terrorist campaigns—transnational influences can lead to more destructive tactics, more indiscriminate targeting, and protracted conflicts.

I define this process as *transnationalization*: the alteration of local contention through transnational influences. This study thus differentiates between local, global, and transnational. By *local*, I mean actors and conditions that exist within a country; the usage is synonymous with “domestic.” *Global* refers to actors, conditions, motivations, and forces that transcend any particular country; this includes global economic flows, international relations between states, globally oriented belief systems like religion, and the activities of nonstate actors. *Transnational*, then, lies between these two concepts, and refers specifically to activities that are “rooted in specific national contexts” but engage with “networks of contacts and conflicts” that cross state boundaries.⁴ I focus on the process through which political violence in a country becomes transnationalized, bracketing other processes of globalization such as economic flows or cultural transformation. In the case of Somalia, the question is whether interactions between Al Shabaab and the transnational Al-Qaeda network have altered the nature of the conflict in a manner that can be considered transnational contention. That is, in the interactive relationship between the local and the global that globalization effects, do the local conditions of combatants outweigh global factors, or can transnational processes change the nature of local conflicts like that in Somalia?

This question has ramifications beyond the study of globalization, specifically in policy and academic debates over the nature of contemporary terrorism. Some argue that the condition of Muslim societies is the cause of much of the religious violence of the past several decades, with a similar set of processes driving conflicts around the world.⁵ Many other scholars, however, argue that local non-religious factors are the key determinants in much political violence.⁶ Similar debates have occurred over US counterterrorism policy since 9/11. The Bush Administration approached the threat from Al-Qaeda as a “war against global terrorism,” in which Al-Qaeda was part of a global trend among radical Islamic groups that threatened both moderate Muslims and US interests.⁷ This attitude was echoed by many neoconservative scholars.⁸ Some, though, have criticized the United States for conflating Al-Qaeda’s activities with all conflicts involving Muslims, many of which were purely local in nature.⁹ Instead, they

argue, the emphasis should be on the local factors involved in conflicts such as Afghanistan and Iraq.

This debate extends to Somalia. Many have worried about Somalia serving as a safe haven for Al-Qaeda, and others claim that Islamist violence in Somalia is part of a broader cultural conflict among Muslims.¹⁰ Others, however, argue that Somalia would not be a safe haven for Al-Qaeda, or go further to argue that the importance of tribal identity in Somalia means that apparent Islamist violence is actually related to tribal disputes and the presence of ethnic Somalis in countries bordering Somalia.¹¹

Neither of the existing broad approaches—conflict in Somalia as part of a broader global movement, or as disconnected from transnational influences—however, is accurate. While there is a distinction between local conflicts and the global scope of groups like Al-Qaeda, one cannot ignore the transnational nature of these conflicts. Transnational networks like Al-Qaeda provide support for local actors, and local groups frame their conflict in religious terms and appeal to the Al-Qaeda network for support. This process can transnationalize a conflict, resulting in extremely violent attacks by the local groups and Al-Qaeda involvement in the conflict through an influx of foreign fighters and ideological and material assistance to local groups. Such involvement alters the conflict, even if local groups do not merge with a “global *jihad*.”¹² The extent of a conflict’s transnationalization depends on two variables: the presence of local entrepreneurs to advance transnational causes and a cultural resonance with the local society.

Based on this approach, Somalia is a case of moderate transnationalization, with some changes to the conflict as a result of transnational influences but little dramatic fusing of the local and global. Al Shabaab is a local entrepreneur for transnational networks like Al-Qaeda, even though most Somalis reject the group’s tactics. The group’s goals and tactics link their actions to transnational influences through the framing of Al Shabaab’s local struggle in global terms, some externalizing of local claims onto global audiences, and incipient transnational coalition formation. This has led to some transnationalization of the conflict in Somalia, with a shift in tactics as a result of transnational influences and the participation of external actors in the conflict. More dramatic signs of transnationalization, however—such as an increase in local groups’ power through transnational influences and the superseding of local differences in favor of the global struggle—are absent.

The chapter proceeds in four parts. First, it surveys the literature on the relationship between local and global political violence. Second, it presents a theory on transnational influences on ethnoreligious conflicts. It then uses this theory to assess the conflict in Somalia. Finally, it presents conclusions and policy implications.

Global and local forces in contemporary political violence

There is a growing literature analyzing the interaction between local and global forces to understand the transnational context of political violence. Much of this literature focuses on the study of terrorism, with transnational connections and religious ideology influencing the tactics and severity of attacks of terrorist groups around the world.¹³ Other works involve transnational linkages among civil wars, with regional factors such as “kin groups” and external safe havens influencing conflict.¹⁴

While existing studies of transnational linkages on terrorism and civil war are useful, however, there are a few shortcomings in the study of situations like the conflict in Somalia. First, civil war studies focus on transnational influences on the onset of conflict, rather than the effect of these influences on the nature of violence. Also, many studies focus on transnational ethnic linkages; in the case of Somalia, while ethnic identities are important, local and transnational actors draw on religious ideologies to justify their actions and influence conflict. Terrorism studies, in contrast, emphasize how transnational influences change contention, but require further specification of the means through which this occurs. And most studies implicitly argue that the globalization of political violence is essentially a dichotomous variable: local disputes are either fused with global contention or driven solely by local factors. In the Somali case, this involves the claim that one must classify the “*jihad*” of Al Shabaab as either local or global. This conceptualization ignores the fact that transnational influences often affect political contention through discrete means and interactions with local conditions.

Parallel developments in two other research programs, however, prove useful in advancing the study of transnational influences on political violence. One of these is the field of transnational contention. While early studies of transnational contention focused on a supposed “global civil society,” more recent works have moved beyond this concept.¹⁵ As Clifford Bob has argued: “new technologies, actors and institutions have promised much but delivered little,” with many aggrieved communities ignored by or isolated from transnational activist networks.¹⁶ Similarly, Sidney Tarrow has argued against a broad view of globalization and claims there is “no single core process leading to a global civil society.”¹⁷ This does not mean that transnational influences on local politics do not exist; instead, scholars must study the “processes and mechanisms that intersect with domestic politics to produce new and differentiated paths of political change.”¹⁸ A similar development evolved in constructivist studies of international relations. Scholars such as Amitav

Acharya and Joshua Busby have moved beyond searching for international norms that guide state behavior, and instead analyze the local political conditions under which a society adopts new norms.¹⁹

The combination of these two lines of research can provide useful direction for the study of transnational influences on political violence. First, the existence of a belief system—such as the global religious ideology of groups like Al-Qaeda and Al Shabaab—is insufficient to cause the transnationalization of local conflict. This outcome will only occur under certain political conditions. Also, the strategies groups adopt as a result of transnational influences, and their effects on a conflict, may be rather nuanced. One must therefore clearly specify the mechanisms through which transnational networks affect local conflict, the varied conditions under which they operate, and the effects they may have on conflict. The next section draws from these literatures to propose an alternative understanding of the local–global dichotomy when analyzing political violence.

Transnational contention and the alteration of local conflict

Answering the question posed above—concerning the extent to which the conflict in Somalia is transnationalized—involves three steps. The first is specifying the mechanisms through which transnational contention occurs.²⁰ The second step is clarifying the conditions under which these mechanisms are likely to occur, thus explaining variation in the extent of a conflict's transnationalization. The third and final step is discussing the effects of these mechanisms on a conflict.

I draw on Bob's and Tarrow's studies of transnational contention for the mechanisms. One is "global framing," or the use of "external symbols to orient local or national claims."²¹ This occurs primarily at the local level, and weakly transnationalizes a conflict. Externalization—the "vertical projection of domestic claims onto international institutions or foreign actors"—and "transnational coalition formation" are stronger transnational mechanisms, resulting in more permanent connections across state borders.²² Transnational contention thus involves a set of actions on the part of both transnational and local actors. The use of global framing by local actors connects their struggle to global issues, drawing the attention of transnational networks and mobilizing local support. Similarly, local groups develop transnational linkages when they externalize their claims—actively connecting them to the activities of international actors—and form cross-border coalitions.

This transnationalization of local contention can occur even if apparent transnational linkages are only attempts on the part of locals to gain the resources of international actors. As Bob argues, linkages between local groups and transnational networks often occur as the result of strategic actions on the part of local groups to draw on transnational support, rather than a strong normative commitment to a transnational ideology.²³ Bob hypothesizes that local actors attempt to “match” transnational networks by framing their goals, culture, and tactics to fit those of the transnational group.²⁴ The primary difference between transnational contention involving strategic “matching” of local actions to transnational networks and principled alliances between local and international groups lies in the nature of the transnational coalitions that form. If local actors attempt to match transnational networks in the absence of ideological affinity, the coalition would depend on the continuing interest of both groups in the relationship, what Tarrow calls an “instrumental coalition.”²⁵ If the two actors were more deeply connected, however, a “federated coalition”—with long-term collaboration—may form.²⁶

This provides some insight into the specific mechanisms that occur in the process of transnational contention. Local groups will frame their contention in global terms, claiming they are part of a broader struggle. These actions can increase their popular standing, while also drawing the attention and possibly the support of international actors. This *global framing* can occur as a result of local groups’ ideological affinities with transnational groups; alternately, it could be the result of strategic calculations on the part of local groups that international attention will help their cause. Groups can also direct their rhetoric or actions not to local authorities, but to international actors. This *externalization* of contention is an attempt to create durable transnational links by drawing in external actors. Finally, *transnational coalition formation* can occur, in which local groups ally themselves with transnational networks to coordinate the activities of both local and international groups. In the case of Somalia, these mechanisms would involve local groups claiming their attacks are part of a global Islamic struggle, calling on transnational actors like Al-Qaeda or worldwide Muslim populace for support, and forming durable coalitions with Al-Qaeda.²⁷

Conditions for transnational influence

Transnational contention, however, does not arise automatically when groups in different locations share a similar ideology or grievance. Transnational linkages require networks that are able to provide resources and rhetorical support to local groups, and an opportunity for local actors to engage in contention.

They also require favorable conditions in order to influence the local conflict. Because this study involves a case of an unstable political situation and a transnational network—Al-Qaeda—the focus will be on the latter variables; that is, it will emphasize variations in the conditions under which transnational influences are able to affect the nature of local contention, rather than the opportunity to do so in the first place. This involves two variables: the cultural resonance between transnational influences and the local context, and the presence of local entrepreneurs.

The first variable is cultural resonance. If a group's potential supporters reject the justification for a group's action, they may refuse to mobilize behind the group or actively oppose it. This is particularly important when dealing with transnational contention, as it is difficult to justify contention on transnational grounds while remaining in line with the local culture.²⁸ The importance of cultural resonance is also seen in international relations studies of norm diffusion, as norms that are out of line with local beliefs often fail to take hold in a society.²⁹ In the case of Somalia, this would be a general ideological affinity between transnational networks like Al-Qaeda and the Somali people.

The other variable is the presence of local entrepreneurs able to act on transnationally inspired claims and tactics. Scholars of transnational contention have pointed to the crucial role local groups play in enabling transnational linkages; without local allies, transnational networks have a hard time establishing themselves in local settings and influencing contention.³⁰ Local entrepreneurs are also crucial in the diffusion of international norms to local contexts, which is unlikely to occur unless individuals with both an incentive and capability to introduce an international norm are present in a society.³¹ For Somalia, this would be Somali groups that share the goals and rhetoric of Al-Qaeda.

The interaction between these two variables will thus determine the extent to which the process of transnational contention is able to influence a local situation. When local entrepreneurs are present and there is cultural resonance, transnational influences will likely be strong. The absence of both of these would indicate minimal, if any, influence. Most cases, however, will fall in between these two extremes. When there is cultural resonance but no local entrepreneurs, sporadic outbursts of contention may appear in response to transnational influences, but they will not alter local politics. In contrast, when local entrepreneurs exist but the frames they advance do not resonate with the public, isolated groups inspired by transnational influences may arise but fail to mobilize the public behind them; this is arguably the case for most Al-Qaeda offshoots.

	Local Entrepreneurs	No Local Entrepreneurs
Cultural Resonance	Sustained transnational influences on local contention	Sporadic outbursts of transnationally-inspired contention
No Cultural Resonance	Transnationally inspired groups, minimal public support	Minimal transnational influence

FIGURE 1 *Conditions enabling transnational influence.*

The effects of transnational influences on local contention

Under certain conditions, local groups will attempt to link their struggle to transnational issues, creating transnational contention. This can have several effects on a local conflict. One is the alteration of tactics and targeting of local actors, with groups adopting those favored by transnational networks.³² In the case of Somalia, this would involve local groups utilizing the tactics of Al-Qaeda, such as suicide bombing, religious-based targeting, and attacks on civilians. Another is the increase in local actors' strength in terms of group cohesiveness or popular support.³³ In terms of Somalia, this would involve Al Shabaab and allied groups gaining the upper hand in the conflict, and possibly being backed by the Somali people. Other effects would be transnational actors actively participating in the conflict, or local actors' wholesale adoption of the transnational network's platform at the expense of local issues. An example would be an influx of foreign fighters or a formal merger between Al Shabaab and Al-Qaeda.³⁴ A larger number of such effects present in a local conflict would indicate a greater level of transnationalization, which should be a function of the above variables. In other words, cultural resonance and the presence of local entrepreneurs would lead to a higher level of transnational influence than would the presence of only one, or none, of the variables.

Transnational contention is thus a multifaceted process involving local actors adjusting rhetoric and tactics to resonate with transnational networks, the formation of transnational coalitions, and the externalization of local contention. Transnational influence, in turn, involves changes in local groups' actions or the fusion of local and global conflicts. This is most likely to occur when local entrepreneurs are present, and there is a cultural fit between transnational and local contention.

Case study: Al Shabaab and the conflict in Somalia

I use this theory to assess the extent to which transnational influences have affected the conflict in Somalia, focusing primarily on the emergence of Al Shabaab and its relationship with Al-Qaeda. Somalia has faced abundant political violence since the chaos surrounding the overthrow of Mohammad Siad Barre in 1991. Violence continued after the abortive international intervention in Somalia, but Somalia returned to the attention of the international community with the rise of the Islamic Courts in the early 2000s. These groups, a coalition of moderate and extremists Islamists, gained control of much of the country before they were opposed first by an alliance of warlords and later by an Ethiopian invasion. Following the Ethiopian invasion, a radical element of the courts broke off, forming into Al Shabaab, while more moderate segments cohered into the current Somali government.³⁵ Al Shabaab has fought for control of Somalia since then, and managed to seize a good amount of territory. The AU sent troops into the country in 2007 to stabilize the situation, and fighting broke out between Al Shabaab and its former ally Hizbul Islam in 2009; Al Shabaab has thus been seriously weakened, although it is still a powerful force in the country.

Al-Qaeda claims to have been present in the country since the early 1990s, and Islamist groups have long been active, but the emergence of Al Shabaab in recent years has marked a new phase in the Somalia conflict. This group has conducted incredibly violent attacks that have earned the condemnation of both Somali and international audiences, and has explicitly connected itself to Al-Qaeda and global Muslim causes. What must be understood, then, is the extent to which the putative global connections of Al Shabaab can be explained as transnational contention, and what effect transnational contention has had on the conflict in Somalia.

The case study assesses each aspect of the theorized transnational influences on political violence. It first discusses whether the permissive conditions are present, then introduces each of mechanisms of transnational contention, before analyzing whether these have altered the nature of the conflict. It concludes with a brief discussion of the African Union Mission in Somalia. The case study draws on secondary sources and media coverage of Somalia from both Somali and major world news sources.³⁶

Permissive conditions: Cultural resonance and local entrepreneurs

The conflict in Somalia is marked by a lack of cultural resonance on the part of transnational influences but the presence of local entrepreneurs willing to advance the transnational claims of groups like Al-Qaeda. Concerning cultural resonance, Somali society is characterized by distinct tribal identities.³⁷ Divisions within Somalia often revolve around competing cultures that arose through the attempt to establish a national identity after independence from colonial rule.³⁸ Tribal bonds have also provided some semblance of order on a local level in the two decades since Somalia has had a functioning central government.³⁹ The strength of these tribal identities limits the appeal of the global Islamic identity championed by groups like Al-Qaeda.

Also, the type of Islam most Somalis follow is rather moderate. Somali Islam is connected to Sufism, which is anathema to Salafists such as Al-Qaeda and Al Shabaab.⁴⁰ The lineage-based legitimacy of Sufism complements the Somali clan system, strengthening the ties between the two aspects of Somali culture.⁴¹ Somalis often have strong “proprietary attitudes” toward Somali Islam, and resist influence from foreign religious actors.⁴² Indeed, radical Somali Islamist groups—such as Al-Ittihad Al-Islami (AIAI)—have failed to attract broad support, and have had to work within the tribal system after failures to mobilize Somalis on the basis of Islam.⁴³

There is thus a lack of cultural resonance between the Salafist ideology of groups like Al-Qaeda and Somali culture. Shortly after the emergence of the Islamic Courts movement as a political force, another Islamist group—Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama’ah—denounced the courts, indicating their lack of broad support, even among Islamic actors; moreover, as Al Shabaab broke off from the Islamic Courts and adopted more radical tactics, the Islamic Scholars Assembly of Somalia called on Al Shabaab to stop criticizing other Islamic groups and cease its violent acts.⁴⁴ There has also been little sign that the Somali people embrace the Salafist brand of Islam.⁴⁵

Despite this lack of cultural resonance, however, local entrepreneurs advancing an ideology parallel to that of Al-Qaeda are present in Somalia, specifically Al Shabaab and other groups that at times have been allied with the movement. Al Shabaab identifies itself with the global struggle Al-Qaeda is waging, and has focused on the United States as an enemy, in addition to Somali targets. And the group has made some connections with Al-Qaeda.

This is evident in both the group’s rhetoric and goals. Shortly after the United States designated Al Shabaab as a terrorist group, Al Shabaab’s spokesman

claimed it was “happy” to be on the list as it is “a name given to pure Muslims.”⁴⁶ Around the same time, the Al Shabaab spokesman claimed the group would extend its struggle beyond Somalia, and threatened the United States specifically.⁴⁷ Also, leaders of Hizbul-Islam—an Islamist militia that was for a time an ally of Al Shabaab, although the two are now rivals—have been trained in Afghanistan, and have called on Muslims worldwide to participate in their “jihad” against foreign troops.⁴⁸ And Ahmed Abi Godane, an Al-Qaeda associate, was affiliated with radical elements of the Islamic Courts, from which Al Shabaab emerged.⁴⁹

Mechanisms of transnational contention

Thus, even though there is little cultural resonance between the transnational influences of groups like Al-Qaeda and Somalia society, local entrepreneurs for these global networks exist. There is also evidence of transnational contention in the Somalia conflict. Al Shabaab has attempted to frame its actions in terms of global struggles, and has directed claims against international audiences as well as local groups. And incipient transnational coalition formation is occurring between Al Shabaab and Al-Qaeda. But more dramatic mechanisms of transnational contention are absent, such as clear and persistent externalization of claims beyond the local context and durable ties with Al-Qaeda.

First, *global framing* is evident in the rhetoric of Al Shabaab and similar groups in Somalia. At several points, these groups have made connections between the conflict in Somalia and global issues involving Islam. In 2006, a website affiliated with elements of the Islamic Courts praised Osama bin Laden and his efforts, and attacked the United States.⁵⁰ Hizbul-Islam members have also framed their actions in a global manner through reference to struggles against the “far enemy”—an Al-Qaeda term for the United States—and claims that Somalis are being targeted by foreign troops for their “Muslim identity.”⁵¹ Likewise, in 2012 Al Shabaab threatened to attack Great Britain after it extradited a Muslim cleric to the United States.⁵² Thus, Al Shabaab is not only focusing on Somalia; it has invoked broader issues—like US international counter-terrorism efforts and worldwide threats to Muslims—to frame its actions in a global manner.

There is also some evidence of *externalization*, or Somali actors specifically appealing to transnational audiences to gain support for their cause. Al Shabaab has also called on all Muslims to support Yemen-based Al-Qaeda fighters, connecting the two groups’ struggles. And in 2011, an American Al Shabaab recruit released a video calling on Muslims to “do jihad” in the United States,

Canada and Europe.⁵³ Moreover, Al Shabaab is actively recruiting members from the Somali diaspora in the United States, with several American Somalis traveling to Somalia to fight for the group.⁵⁴ Appealing to Muslims outside of Somalia in their fight connects these international audiences to the conflict in Somalia, although a more intense form of externalization—involving international mobilization in support of Al Shabaab—does not appear to be occurring.

Finally, attempts at transnational coalition formation are apparent. There are numerous nonspecific reports of Al Shabaab being tied to Al-Qaeda. In 2006, Ayro reportedly said “the name Muslim and al-Qaeda are the same . . . [we] are alike.”⁵⁵ Also, there are indications Al Shabaab is in communication with Al-Qaeda: when Al Shabaab executed a local Somali politician in January 2009 for “showing sympathy for Christianity,” a video of the act later appeared on an Al-Qaeda website.⁵⁶ And some have argued that Al-Qaeda is increasing its focus on Africa—specifically the conflicts in Somalia and the Maghreb—in the aftermath of Osama bin Laden’s death in 2012.⁵⁷ Yet, Al-Qaeda is not involved in Somalia to the same extent it was in Iraq after the US invasion of Afghanistan under the Taliban.

Transnational influences on the conflict

While Al Shabaab’s behavior indicates transnational influences, the transnationalization of the conflict is moderate. The most dramatic influence has been the change of tactics by local actors in line with transnational influences; Al Shabaab targets Sufis, Christians, and international actors in the country, and has adopted suicide bombing as a tactic, all in line with the type of attacks Al-Qaeda favors. And Al-Qaeda elements have done some fighting in the country, although this has been limited. More significant transnational effects, however—like an increase in Al Shabaab’s strength and complete globalization of the conflict—have not occurred.

A major change has been the increasingly religious nature of targeting in the conflict following the emergence of Al Shabaab. Throughout much of the conflict in Somalia, violence occurred along clan lines or between warlords’ militias. Al Shabaab, however, often targets religious groups it opposes due to its exclusivist ideology. Al Shabaab conducted many attacks on Sufis, killing clerics, and desecrating religious shrines.⁵⁸ Al Shabaab has also targeted Somali Christians, killing civilians found carrying Bibles, or suspected of running underground churches.⁵⁹ Both of these are in line with Al-Qaeda’s emphasis on targeting those outside its narrow definition of Muslim identity.

Beyond religious targeting, Al Shabaab is also notable for its attacks on foreigners and those suspected of helping them, similar to Al-Qaeda's emphasis on the United States and Western targets. Al Shabaab has killed foreign aid workers, Somali peace activists, and other Somalis working with aid groups. Attacks, in general, on Europeans and Americans in Somalia have been increasing since Al Shabaab emerged.⁶⁰ And in 2012, British authorities claimed that the widow of one of the 7/7 London bombers is currently working with Al Shabaab and plans on attacking European or American targets.⁶¹

A more direct connection can be seen in Al Shabaab's tactics. Suicide bombing, which was absent in Somalia before Al Shabaab emerged, has become a common tactic of the group. The first suicide attacks conducted in Somalia occurred in 2006, and have increased in frequency since then; while not all of them can be linked to Al Shabaab, some were accompanied by videos of the bombings distributed on websites connected to radical Islamists in Somalia.⁶² Several recent high-profile suicide attacks are widely assumed to have been carried out by Al Shabaab, such as the October 2011 attack in Mogadishu that killed 80.⁶³ The diffusion of suicide bombing through the influence of Al-Qaeda-related operations in other countries is thus a rather clear sign of transnational influences on the conflict in Somalia.

In addition to altered tactics, some transnational influence can be seen in Al-Qaeda participation in the conflict in Somalia. While Al-Qaeda's presence in Somalia is limited, Al-Qaeda's rhetoric has emphasized the importance of the conflict in Somalia and Al-Qaeda's commitment to Al Shabaab efforts. There are also reports of foreign fighters traveling to Somalia to work with Al Shabaab; these include individuals from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Sudan, as well as some Somali-Americans who are part of the Somali diaspora in the United States.⁶⁴ Finally, terrorist training camps were likely present at some point in Somalia.⁶⁵

More dramatic signs of transnationalization, though, are absent. For example, there is little transcending of local differences in favor of the global struggle, as would be the case if Al Shabaab was able to unite Somalia's different clans. There is evidence that elements of the Hawiye clan back Al Shabaab; the clan was also a backer of the Islamic Courts; some therefore argue that the current conflicts are only an extension of clan divisions.⁶⁶ Similarly, there are suggestions that clan divisions within Al Shabaab and the broader Islamist movement have undermined its unity.⁶⁷

And while Al Shabaab has persisted in the face of local opposition and military pressure, Al Shabaab's influence is not as strong as its continued attacks would suggest, indicating the transnational influences on the conflict have not significantly increased its strength. Al Shabaab's position became

weaker as the group came under increasing military pressure, from both the international forces and Sufi groups like Ahlu Sunna Wahl-Jamaa.⁶⁸ The violent divisions between Al Shabaab and Hizbul Islam also weaken the group.⁶⁹

Transnationalization and the African Union mission to Somalia

The African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) deserves special attention due to its international nature and its effects on the transnationalization of political violence in the country. The African Union began the mission in January of 2007, and the United Nations Security Council approved it in February of that year; the mission worked with the transitional government in Somalia to stabilize the country and train security forces. Troops serving under AMISOM have also conducted numerous military operations against Al Shabaab. Numerous countries have contributed to the mission, including Kenya, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Uganda, and Nigeria. AMISOM has managed to greatly degrade Al Shabaab's capabilities, although much stabilization is still required in Somalia. The mission also accelerated some of the transnationalization seen earlier in the conflict in Somalia.

AMISOM has intensified the global framing exhibited by Al Shabaab. As was noted, Al Shabaab has tried to frame its struggle in global terms to appeal to international Muslim audiences. The presence of foreign troops in the country has contributed to these efforts, and Al Shabaab has pointed to African Union troops in the country as a sign the group is part of a larger, religious struggle. For example, in 2012, Al Shabaab released a video of what it claims were slain Burundian soldiers in Somalia as part of the peacekeeping mission; the narrator compared the battle to some of struggles early on in Islam's history, implicitly placing Al Shabaab's fight against AMISOM among grander Islamic symbols.⁷⁰

AMISOM also extended the scope of the conflict in Somalia—making real Al Shabaab's rhetorical global framing—as Al Shabaab moved from merely threatening external actors over events in Somalia to actively conducting attacks. One example of this was the bombing of a Ugandan bar during the 2010 World Cup.⁷¹ Al Shabaab also attacked a bus in Kampala in December 2010.⁷² And the group has threatened to attack Burundi—and reportedly sent fighters to the country, although they were intercepted—for its work with the African Union mission.⁷³ Likewise, Al Shabaab threatened attacks throughout the region after African Union forces took the city of Kismayo from the group in the fall of 2012.⁷⁴

The transnationalization of the conflict in Somalia: Conclusions and implications

The conflict in Somalia has been transnationalized, but not to the extent of Al Shabaab operating concurrently with the global Al-Qaeda network. The presence of local entrepreneurs sharing Al-Qaeda's ideology created conditions sufficient for some transnational influences. Al Shabaab has framed its struggle in both global and religious terms, attempted to form a coalition with like-minded groups beyond Somalia, and made some appeals to transnational actors for support. This has led to moderate transnational influences on the conflict; Al Shabaab has adopted the tactics and targeting of Al-Qaeda and its affiliates, and some foreign fighters participate in the conflict. Yet, this has not resulted in the transcending of local issues in favor of the global struggle, and the extent to which transnational influences can explain the prolonged nature of the conflict in Somalia are unclear.

This chapter thus presents a middle path on debates over the globalization of the conflict in Somalia. Local conflicts involving Muslims are not homogenous across countries, and often arise and operate separately from globally oriented movements like Al-Qaeda. But many countries resemble Somalia, with a local group following Al-Qaeda's model but the broader society rejecting the group's tactics; examples include Algeria, Yemen, and Pakistan. The transnational Al-Qaeda network can influence conflicts through local groups' adoption of Al-Qaeda's frame and tactics and Al-Qaeda support in terms of supplies, training and foreign fighters. This can alter the nature of the conflict—leading to intractability and severe violence—even if the local group does not transition to a global scale of operation. Many more cases exist in which there is some cultural resonance between transnational issues and the local context but no organized groups are present. In these cases, transnationalization leads to sporadic contention that fails to cohere into a distinct movement, such as the short-lived protests among Muslims around the world in response to the 2005 Danish Muhammad cartoon controversy. Finally, the strongest cases for transnationalization—with both cultural resonance and local entrepreneurs—are likely absent, as it would be difficult to conceive of a situation in which the radical violent Salafism of Al-Qaeda resonated with a populace.

This chapter provides implications for the study of contemporary political violence. Studies of political violence should take transnational influences into account, not as a monolithic global force drawing all Muslims along in its violent wake, but rather—to paraphrase Tarrow—as a set of processes connecting transnational and local contention. Moreover, the future of violent conflicts involving Muslims depends on developments among radical transnational

networks' local entrepreneurs and cultural resonance between these actors and local publics. We are currently witnessing the rejection of groups like Al-Qaeda by many Muslim societies but the persistence of local entrepreneurs like Al Shabaab. Violence like that seen in Somalia may become depressingly familiar in the future, but in the absence of a broader cultural resonance, groups like Al Shabaab will ultimately be self-defeating.

This chapter can also speak to the broader study of globalization and the nature of contemporary political contention. In many cases, analyzing contention only in terms of local conditions and territorially demarcated identities will be insufficient. With the increasing ease of communications and travel, the process of connecting likeminded individuals in different countries is relatively simple. Yet, scholars should not interpret the presence of transnational influences on contention as a sign that globalization has succeeded in compressing all of time and space, or that transnational contention can be analyzed without paying attention to the discrete mechanisms that constitute it.⁷⁵

This study also contains implications for policymakers considering specific solutions to the conflict in Somalia. Policymakers must approach each conflict separately, and not merely as varied manifestations of "Muslim rage." They also, however, must remain aware of the possibility of transnational effects on local conflicts, which can lead to intractability and destabilization of the surrounding region. Transnationalization can also result in an influx of foreign fighters who may later return home and conduct terrorist attacks. More important, though, may be the diffuse transnational impacts of a group like Al Shabaab. Al Shabaab's attacks can resonate with likeminded groups in other countries, which could inspire similar groups to arise and either launch terrorist attacks against otherwise-stable societies or exacerbate existing conflicts.

Potentially transnationalized conflicts like that in Somalia thus require both international action to disrupt combatants and international engagement with local actors. The international community should be prepared to intervene when militant groups with transnational ties gain significant presence in a territory, as transnational influences can exacerbate the conflict and cause it to spill over into other countries. These efforts, however, must be accompanied by a policy of engagement with Islamist actors that are tolerant of religious diversity and accept democratic processes. An essential aspect of preventing Al-Qaeda and Al Shabaab-type groups from resonating with the broader populace is the presence of locally-viable alternatives, in the form of groups that are both moderate and in line with the local cultural context. When intervening in a conflict, international actors should thus endeavor to differentiate between Islamic groups that may not be ideal partners but with whom the international community could engage, and groups—like Al Shabaab—that present an intractable threat to a region.

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4

Involving foreign fighters in Somalia

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Somalia has been described for two decades as a failed state, and *The Economist* ranked it as the “worst country in the world” in 2010. And yet, uncounted hundreds of individuals have traveled there from elsewhere to join factions vying for power in the ongoing conflict. Evidence uncovered in the United States and other Western nations demonstrates complex foreign recruitment networks established by Somali-based organizations. But just how have these recruiters persuaded citizens of developed countries to become involved in internecine Somali warfare?

This chapter examines empirical data concerning the recruitment of foreign fighters to Somalia in the context of relevant theoretical literature on civil conflict participation. While Islamist groups such as Al Shabaab certainly issue calls to the transnational Islamic community for assistance, why are these appeals actually effective in enticing resettled Somali refugees and non-Somalis into transgressing the laws of their home states and bearing the risks and costs of transcontinental journeys? What patterns are observable in recruitment messaging and foreign fighter transportation? Likewise, can we learn anything useful from the profiles of recruiters or transnational recruits to apply to homeland security or counter-insurgency operations elsewhere?

On 17 September 2009, two suicide car bombers killed 21 peacekeeping troops at the headquarters of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) in Mogadishu. The Al Shabaab insurgent group immediately claimed

responsibility for the attack and identified the perpetrators, one of whom it named as 18-year-old Omar Mohamud. It was difficult to ascertain from the media coverage of the event whether the greater shock was that Mohamud was a legal permanent resident of the United States who had disappeared from his parent's home in Seattle, or that his actions were no longer seen as improbable: Another American had ventured to Somalia to be a suicide bomber nearly a year before.¹

Still another United States citizen, 20-year-old Jamal Bana of Minneapolis, similarly "turned up in Somalia and was later shot to death. His parents learned of his death when a friend urged them to look at a website; there they saw a photo of their son's dead body. They say they believe he was brainwashed,"² a recurrent refrain among members of the Somali-American community in America. As one member of the Seattle Somali-American community noted in response to reports about Mohamud, the possibility of return to the impoverished failed state torn by 20 years of internecine warfare is not desired by most members of the diaspora and is actually threatened as punishment to recalcitrant children: "You guys crazy. . . . When they see you say 'I'm going to take you back,' they say 'What did I do?' They're scared."³

And yet, a growing number of foreign nationals—not all of whom have been Somalis—were blamed for escalating levels of violence there beginning in 2006. Wafula Wamunyinyi, head of the AMISOM, reported that "foreign fighters from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania to far countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sudan, Bangladesh and the United States have joined the militant group." Indeed foreigners, of whom the African Union estimated there were 1200–1500 in the insurgency by 2009, actually constituted the bulk of Al Shabaab's leadership. Wamunyinyi claimed that they included Pakistani national Abu Musa Mombasa, head of the organization's security and training operation, and Mohamed Abu Faid, a Saudi, who allegedly financed Al Shabaab operations.⁴

For its part, Al Shabaab promoted the intervention of foreign fighters in its statements and on internet videos. Yet its officials took issue with the characterization of these recruits as "foreign"; not because so many of them were born in Somalia and could be said to be returning home, but because of shared transnational ties through a different constitutive identity community: "Those who say our Muslim brothers are foreigners are wrong. They came here to assist their brothers in Somalia," Al Shabaab official Sheikh Ali Hussein Fidow told a press conference in Mogadishu. "We sent an alarm to the Muslim world when Ethiopia invaded our country, and they sent us brothers to help us."⁵

Examining foreign fighters

What accounts for the sudden large influx of third-party combatants into a conflict that had been ongoing for nearly two decades? Why would individuals with relatively comfortable lives in developed countries leave them behind, breaking antiterrorism laws in the process, to join a rebel group fighting both national and international military forces, in a failed state that *The Economist* ranked as the “worst country in the world”?⁶ It seems a stretch to attempt to apply the common explanation for mobilization in the civil war literature—greed for pillage—particularly to the suicide bombers. And yet, it is not clear why the alternative explanation—fighting out of grievance over local conditions—would apply to outsiders thousands of kilometers away, or what sort of concerns in Somalia would be pressing enough for foreign nationals to shoulder the costs of going to join the insurgencies themselves.

Other explanations for mobilization in contentious politics, including demographic youth bulges, ineffective assimilation of immigrant groups, or poverty, are likewise insufficient to explain why only a small handful of Somali expats return as jihadists, and they fail to justify any rationale for Western non-Somalis traveling to join Al Shabaab. It is clear from media reports and criminal proceedings that most foreign fighters are not simply arriving under their own volition to the war zone, but have been actively recruited by Al Shabaab agents in the Horn of Africa and farther abroad. The question then becomes just how have recruiters persuaded citizens of developed countries to become involved in the conflict in Somalia?

The involvement of noncitizens in civil conflicts is hardly a new development, nor is it a phenomenon limited to Islamists. That the increase of suicide bombings and other high-lethality attacks in Somalia can be attributed to foreign nationals is a cause for concern, but it is not a unique development, and other similar cases elsewhere, both historical and contemporary, offer insights into how these rising levels of transnational violence might be checked. This chapter therefore begins with an overview of the involvement of foreign nationals and transnational non-state actors in the Somali conflict before proceeding to examine how this data fits with available information on other cases of insurgencies that recruited transnationally.

The use of the term “foreign fighter” to describe this phenomenon is not immune to challenge. As noted, many of the Europeans and Americans who have traveled to Somalia to join Al Shabaab technically have citizenship in Somalia or were at least born there. These statistics stand in contradistinction to most other contemporary cases of nonresidents of conflict states recruited to join Islamist insurgencies. For example, the foreign fighters in Iraq were not expats but originated

primarily from Saudi Arabia and Libya.⁷ Likewise, the “first generation” of modern jihadis, who fought against the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan, was comprised of individuals who had never been there before and considered themselves to be Arab or another ethnicity and not what they viewed as retrograde Afghans.⁸ And yet, the messaging of the conflict as one threatening brother Muslims rather than fellow Somalis differs significantly from other cases of mobilization among ethnic diasporas, such as the hundreds of Albanian immigrants in Western Europe and the United States who answered the call of the Homeland Calling organization that recruited them to fight in Kosovo in 1999.⁹

There are a very limited number of studies on foreign fighters available at present, and most focus on isolated cases (particularly Iraq or Chechnya), or view the phenomenon as peculiar to the modern jihad movement, with occasional fleeting references to the International Brigades of the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s. In this study, foreign fighters are categorized by the criteria of *non-citizens of conflict states who join insurgencies during civil conflicts*. This definition does not include belligerents enlisted in a foreign state’s military that is ordered into the conflict, foreigners who join another state’s regular military for pay or citizenship, such as French Foreign Legionnaires, or employees of private security companies (PSCs) under contract with a state where they are not a citizen. These are the criteria of the Foreign Fighter Project, a dataset of transnational insurgencies dating back to the emergence of the post-Napoleonic modern international system.¹⁰

As noted, a number of Somalis who traveled from abroad to join Al Shabaab were only permanent residents of their host countries, and there was no mechanism in place by which Somalia could have revoked their birth citizenship. However, there is no evidence to support a claim that the distinction between being a citizen or permanent resident of their adopted homelands had any bearing on their receptiveness to recruitment by Al Shabaab, or in the astonishment that the friends and relatives of the foreign fighters had in learning that their loved ones had traveled to fight on the rebel side in a war that had been underway for nearly two decades.

Background to recruitment

The collapse of political authority in Somalia in 1991 after a coup against the central government resulted in an essentially anarchic state that persists two decades later. As nature abhors a vacuum, external actors flowed into the country during this period, ranging from a UN humanitarian relief operation to violent transnational non-state actors. Among the latter were the first Al-Qaeda operatives dispatched to influence the conflict.

These “Afghan Arab” veterans of the recently ended conflict against the Soviet Union (which had likewise recently ended, along with its financial sponsorship of the Somali government) added to the chaos surrounding Operation Restore Hope. Osama bin Laden claimed that he sent 250 mujahidin to fight US troops, although his then-protectors in the Sudanese government claimed that the number was far lower. Apparently this first group of foreign fighters provided training to local militias but did not integrate well with the Somalis, and reportedly fled after being frightened by the violence of the First Battle of Mogadishu, which was also attributed as the reason for American withdrawal. As one jihadi recalled, “the Somalis treated us in a bad way . . . due to the bad leadership situation there, we decided to withdraw.”¹¹

Emergence of radical Islamism in Somalia

However, the failure of the international intervention to produce sustainable governance eventually resulted in the same scenario that was simultaneously transpiring in Afghanistan: The continued chaos of warlord rivalries led to an Islamist revival predicated on the promise of stability. The Islamic Union (IU), which was originally “comprised mainly of educated, young men who had studied or worked in the Middle East,” had originally formed in the 1980s to challenge President Siad Barre’s regime and replace it with sharia. Its members also entertained the irredentist objective of forging a Greater Somalia that would include northeastern Kenya, Ethiopia’s Ogaden region, and Djibouti.¹²

Certain IU members were known to have had ties to Al-Qaeda, including future Al Shabaab leader Aden Hashi Ayro. After Ayro’s death in a 2008 airstrike, Al Shabaab posted an online biography of him, claiming the Battle of Mogadishu was “the first time he fought under the supervision of Al-Qaeda, and with its logistical support and expertise.” *The New York Times* would report at the time of Ayro’s death that he was “long identified as one of Al-Qaeda’s top operatives in East Africa.”¹³ At some point prior to 9/11, he trained in Afghanistan in explosives and insurgent tactics. He ultimately returned to Somalia around 2003 and launched a series of operations that included attacks against foreign aid workers and the murder of a BBC journalist.¹⁴ His successor, Mukhtar Roobow Ali, known as Abu Mansoor, had also trained in Afghanistan and claimed to have organized Al Shabaab in the mid-2000s in response to the presence of foreign Christian troops in Somalia.¹⁵

As anarchy persisted, a number of the *ulema*, who had been providing governance under informal religious authority, formed the Islamic Courts Union

(ICU) in February 2006 and seized Mogadishu that June before expanding their area of control southward to include Kismayo and Beletuein.¹⁶ While the ICU quickly consolidated power at the expense of the warlords, it suffered a stunning reversal that December when, in response to a series of escalating threats and border provocations, neighboring Ethiopia sent its army to support the embattled Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and drove the ICU from power and its leaders into exile. Some members of the armed wing of the ICU responded by launching an insurgency, but one with different objectives than its predecessor Islamist groups.¹⁷ Whereas the IU and ICU had nationalist goals, Al Shabaab leaders are transnational Islamists who have sought to expand the playing field, not just through Al-Qaeda ties but by initiating their own foreign fighter recruitment.¹⁸

Harakat Al Shabaab Mujahidin, or “The Movement of the Warrior Youth,” is a fitting name for an organization whose members are mostly between the ages of 14 and 22, although with many reportedly joining the insurgency because they were unable to secure any other form of employment in war-ravaged Somalia.¹⁹ Although initially tied to the ICU, Al Shabaab became a radical splinter group in late 2007 when moderate ICU leaders reemerged as the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia (ARS) and expressed a willingness to negotiate political control. Al Shabaab boycotted the conference, and its leaders launched vitriolic attacks on the ARS for failing to adopt a global jihadist ideology.²⁰ While the Islamist groups did enjoy a surge in popular support after the Ethiopian invasion, the African Union responded to the near-collapse of the TFG by establishing a multilateral military force (AMISOM) that had driven the ICU—and subsequently Al Shabaab—out of all major population centers by late 2012.²¹

Al-Qaeda connections

[Prior to this point,] the international jihadist movement regarded Al Shabaab as a provincial African outfit, one that had failed to show any bravery in the form of suicide bombings. A small Qaeda cell had used Somalia as a base for the 1998 African embassy bombings, but for the most part the Persian Gulf Arabs behind the movement considered the Somalis too turbulent, clan-obsessed and independent to make their territory a major base.²²

But Al-Qaeda publicly announced its support for Al Shabaab in 2006 after the Ethiopian occupation began. Ayman al-Zawahiri, in a video message disseminated on the internet, called upon all Muslims to fight the Ethiopians: “I appeal to the lions of Islam in Yemen, the state of faith and wisdom.

I appeal to my brothers, the lions of Islam in the Arab Peninsula, the cradle of conquests. And I also appeal to my brothers, the lions of Islam in Egypt, Sudan, the Arab Maghreb, and everywhere in the Muslim world to rise up to aid their Muslim brethren in Somalia.” In July 2007, he released another video describing Somalia as one of the three main theaters of battle for mujahidin, along with Iraq and Afghanistan.²³

While Al-Qaeda’s previous efforts to consolidate control in Somalia had failed, the post-occupation successes of Al Shabaab in southern Somalia gave hope to the network’s rank and file, which was increasingly turning from South Asia toward the Gulf of Aden for operational havens and opportunities to establish presences in failed states.²⁴

After Al-Shabab emerged as a distinct entity, its leaders reached out to Al-Qaeda’s senior leadership, and its chief military strategist openly declared his allegiance to bin Laden. . . . Al-Shabab’s chief military strategist formally reached out to Al-Qaeda’s senior leadership in a 24-minute video entitled *March Forth*, which circuited the jihadist web on 30 August 2008. In it, [Saleh Ali Saleh] Nabhan offers salutations to bin Laden and pledges allegiance to ‘the courageous commander and my honorable leader.’²⁵

Other connections between Al Shabaab leadership and the transnational Al-Qaeda movement include Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, who helped train Mohamed Farah Aidid’s militia in 1993, and helped plan and organize the 1998 embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salam and the simultaneous attacks on an Israeli hotel and charter jet in Mombasa in 2002, before becoming a senior operational commander in Al Shabaab. Another official, Abu Taha al-Sudani, also known as Tariq Abdullah, was Al-Qaeda’s emir in East Africa and received training in explosives from the organization. Hassan Turki and Supreme Islamic Courts Council (SICC) leader Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys were also Al Shabaab/Al-Qaeda connectors. Gouled Hassan Dourad, part of an Al-Qaeda cell operated by al-Sudani, was implicated by the United States in a 2003 plot to bomb Camp Lemonier, a US Special Forces base in Djibouti that hosted the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa contingent. Camp Lemonier has served as the main operating base in the region—along with forward operating bases in Ethiopia—for many of the American airstrikes on militant targets in Somalia. Since his capture in 2006, Dourad has been held at the detention center in Guantanamo Bay.²⁶

As a result of its tangible connections to bin Laden, the United States Department of State officially named Al Shabaab as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on 26 February 2008. In conjunction with this development, the

White House issued Executive Order 13224 that froze the accounts of three known leaders in Al Shabaab and prohibited any US citizens from engaging in any financial transactions with them.²⁷ This last point came to have particular importance as Western intelligence sources estimated that, among Al Shabaab's force of between 3,000 and 7,000 members, at least 500 were foreign fighters who joined between 2005 and 2010, most of them originating in North America, Europe, and the Middle East.²⁸

Recruitment of foreign fighters

The recruitment for jihad, particularly among members of the Somali diaspora, has attracted a great deal of attention in several Western states. The United States in particular, which had until this point been largely spared from dealing with homegrown cases of radicalization, witnessed its first citizen becoming a suicide bomber as a result of the conflict in Somalia. Although not a high-profile domestic media incident—it was neither an attack on American infrastructure nor directed against fellow citizens in uniform—it was nonetheless a disturbing development for those who feared it was both precedent for and a portent of similar future acts. And yet, the involvement of the Somali diaspora in the United States and other Anglophone countries represents only the progression of transnational trends, and a next step in the logic of foreign fighter recruitment that began elsewhere.

Scandinavia

When the conflict in Somalia began, the Nordic countries continued their tradition of asylum for humanitarian refugees and quickly grew relatively sizable communities of Somali expats who received legal residency or citizenship. Of the approximately 50,000 Somalis living across Northern Europe 20 years later, half resided in Sweden in what was described as that country's most vulnerable and least integrated immigrant community.²⁹ Al Shabaab was suspected to have been recruiting in Sweden's three largest cities—Malmö, Gothenburg, and Stockholm—which are also home to the bulk of its Somali population. Various Swedish newspapers reported that members of the organization visited mosques in these metropolises, with one imam claiming that religious leaders and parents decided not to send their children to religious study for fear that they would be recruitment targets.³⁰

About 20 residents of the Rinkeby neighborhood, or “Little Mogadishu, a drab suburb of the Swedish capital” are known to have joined Al Shabaab. The Swedish state security agency SÄPO declared in 2010 that five of them had been killed and ten were still at large in Somalia. As Al Shabaab had not been declared a terrorist group in Sweden, there was no legal mechanism for preventing Somali residents from leaving without proof that they plan to commit terrorism.³¹

When a Danish man of Somali descent killed 24 people in a December 2009 Mogadishu suicide bombing, Somali youth in Sweden reported that they had been approached by Al Shabaab recruiters (at a youth center that had been receiving government subsidies for its athletic programs) who showed them videos of Al-Qaeda suicide bombings and urged them to join the jihad back in Somalia. One Somali-Swede, whose uncle left Sweden in 2008, was also approached by the one of the recruiters. “He used to ask, like, ‘Have you ever thought about the way things are in Somalia? Do you want to help?’ You knew what he was getting at: jihad.”³²

Great Britain

In late 2006, the Muslim Association of Britain hosted senior leaders of the ICU at the notorious Finsbury Park Mosque. That December, Ethiopia reported capturing three British passport holders in Somalia, and another seven the following month.³³ Estimates of the number of Britons who have left for jihad in Somalia vary between two dozen and one hundred. Rather than impoverished immigrants facing difficult assimilations, they appear to more closely match the profiles to the 7/7 and Glasgow Airport attack perpetrators: apparently successful graduate students at prestigious universities and community leaders who gradually withdrew from the broader civil society as they affiliated more closely with groups that promote transnational Muslim solidarity over considerations of citizenship.³⁴

Available information suggests that recruiters framed the conflict in Somalia as a necessary defensive mobilization in the same fashion that Islamists use to draw volunteers for other conflicts, the same type of messaging and techniques used by prior transnational insurgencies as well. Somali families in Britain have reported receiving anonymous phone calls from Al Shabaab recruiters urging them to send their children abroad in the name of Islam. The conflict framing is reflected as well in statements by recruits. One called home to tell his wife that he was defending his country and his rights. “Some of those who have left London for Mogadishu claim to be nationalists opposed to western influence in Somalia. However, one

man from north London in his mid-twenties cited injustices against Muslims elsewhere before joining . . ."³⁵

Another 21-year-old British university student, who conducted a suicide bombing outside of Baidoa near where the Somali prime minister was staying at the time, addressed a recorded statement to the estimated 250,000 members of the British Somali community: "Oh my people, know that I am doing this martyrdom operation for the sake of Allah. I advise you to migrate to Somalia and wage war against your enemies. Death in honor is better than life in humiliation."³⁶

United States

In her *New York Times* articles describing how this frame of the conflict persuaded more than 20 young Americans to travel to the Horn of Africa as insurgents, Andrea Elliot described the spread of Al Shabaab via transnational recruitment entrepreneurs. Just as Al Shabaab officials crossed the Mediterranean to engage in recruitment in mosques and youth centers, their European compatriots traversed the Atlantic to continue the operation in North America, and they too immediately sought out the largest and likeliest audience: "The recruitment of the men [from Minnesota, a state with a large Nordic population,] can be traced to a group of Somali immigrants from Northern Europe and other countries who, in 2005, traveled to Somalia to fight with the Islamist movement, a senior law enforcement official said. A handful of those men later went to Minneapolis, the official said, and helped persuade the first large group from the Twin Cities to leave for Somalia starting in late 2007." By January 2008, most of them were already in training camps in Al Shabaab-controlled southern Somalia.³⁷

As in Europe, assimilation has produced a mixed record for Somali refugees. According to the 2000 Census, Somali-Americans suffered from the highest rates of unemployment among all East African refugee communities in the United States.³⁸ Sixty percent of the estimated 100,000 strong Somali-American community in the United States lives in poverty.³⁹ And yet, deprivation alone does not explain the process of assuming the costs and risks of becoming a foreign fighter. For one thing, it is difficult to imagine Al Shabaab agents making credible offers of substantial material rewards to residents of developed countries. But, more pertinently, many of those who appear to be the most motivated recruits were less disadvantaged than their cohorts who did not mobilize:

In the first wave of Somalis who left [beginning in 2007] were men whose uprooted lives resembled those of immigrants in Europe who have joined

the jihad. They faced barriers of race and class, religion and language. Mr. Ahmed, the 26-year-old suicide bomber, struggled at community colleges before dropping out. His friend Zakaria Maruf, 30, fell in with a violent street gang and later stocked shelves at a Wal-Mart. [But] if failure had shadowed this first group of men, the young Minnesotans who followed them to Somalia were succeeding in America. Mr. Hassan, the engineering student, was a rising star in his college community. Another of the men was a pre-med student who had once set his sights on an internship at the Mayo Clinic. They did not leave the United States for a lack of opportunity, their friends said; if anything, they seemed driven by unfulfilled ambition.⁴⁰

Rather than being easily characterized as unassimilated and aggrieved, Mohammed Hassan, for example, was described by friends as outgoing, bright, and charming. Classmates voted him “most friendly” out of the graduating seniors at Roosevelt High School in 2006.⁴¹

The same could also be said of Omar Hammami, the gifted son of a Syrian immigrant father and American mother, who was raised with a Christian upbringing in rural Alabama. Hammami excelled in school and soon began to explore his Muslim heritage, drifting into Salafist circles and even managing to convert acquaintances along the way. He relocated to Canada, where he married a Somali refugee, and eventually migrated to Egypt before traveling to Somalia in 2005 under the cover of visiting his in-laws in Mogadishu. Hammami quickly rose to prominence within Al Shabaab and, under the nom de guerre Abu Mansoor al-Amriki, created online recruitment videos targeted at Americans, including one of him leading a squad of fighters to a rap soundtrack. Among his videos was footage of a summer 2008 ambush of Ethiopian troops in which his co-combatants were members of the Minnesota group.⁴²

Hammami apparently journeyed to Somalia in the company of fellow American Daniel Aljughaifi, who he met via an Islamist internet message board. Aljughaifi, who was the first American to face criminal charges for joining the insurgency when he was apprehended on the Kenyan border,⁴³ had been born Daniel Maldonado, reportedly grew up isolated in New Hampshire because of his Puerto Rican ethnicity, and was arrested for minor juvenile offenses before converting and becoming connected to Islamic causes.⁴⁴

To help erect a Sharia state, 24-year-old American Amir Mohamed Meshal of Tinton Falls, New Jersey also traveled to Somalia, but fled to Kenya and was arrested after the Ethiopian occupation. Although interviewed repeatedly in Kenya by American FBI agents who concluded that he had no terrorist

connections, Meshal was deported to Ethiopia where he was imprisoned before eventually being returned to the United States.⁴⁵

Other recruits came from a community of 30,000 Somalis concentrated in a downscale neighborhood of Seattle. One member, Abdifatah Yusuf Isse, pleaded guilty in Minnesota to charges of recruiting for Al Shabaab in the community there.⁴⁶ Ruben Shumpert, an African-American convert to Islam from Seattle who fought as Amir Abdul Muhaimin, was killed in Mogadishu in 2008. FBI investigations into American recruitment efforts also proceeded in Boston, San Diego, Seattle, Columbus, and Portland.⁴⁷

Arrests indicated a widespread network of logistical support dispersed throughout the United States, with funds being wired to a Shabaab compatriot from St Louis, Missouri,⁴⁸ and raised by Somali diaspora members “through door-to-door solicitations and teleconferences in Somali communities in Minneapolis, Rochester and other locations in the United States and Canada,” including in California and Alabama.⁴⁹ In Virginia, a 20-year-old convert to Islam named Zachary Chesser, who had been operating jihadi websites and had threatened to kill the creators of the television program *South Park* over its depiction of the Prophet Mohammad, was arrested while attempting to organize travel to Kenya and then to Somalia to join Al Shabaab.⁵⁰

Shirwa Ahmed, a 27-year-old college student from Minneapolis, became the first American suicide bomber when he detonated on 29 October 2008, one of five simultaneous suicide bombings in Puntland by Al Shabaab in attacks conducted in Al-Qaeda’s signature style. FBI Director Robert Muller argued that Ahmed, a naturalized American citizen who had left Somalia for high school in Minneapolis in 1996, was radicalized and recruited in the United States.⁵¹ However, since Ahmed was originally from Somalia, and was associated with a declared foreign terrorist organization, the United States National Counterterrorism Center was reluctant to classify Ahmed as an American “homegrown extremist.” Still, Center officials voiced their concern that other Somali-Americans with valid citizenship could possibly return and engage in terrorist attacks in the United States.⁵²

What prompted this diverse group of young men to cross two continents to join the Al Shabaab insurgency, many during the period in which it was being pushed back by Ethiopian troops? While the refugees could conceivably be said to have been returning home, none of the converts had been to Somalia previously. Why make the trip for what was, at the time, an insurgency suffering serious reversals? Ironically, it was the success of the international campaign against the ICU that served as *casus belli* for the foreign recruits:

While religious devotion may have predisposed them to sympathize with the Islamist cause in Somalia, it took a major geopolitical event—the Ethiopian invasion of their homeland in 2006—to spur them to join what they saw as a legitimate resistance movement, said friends of the men Many Somalis saw it as a Christian crusade into a Muslim land. They were outraged at reports of Ethiopian troops raping Somali women, looting mosques and killing civilians. The Shabaab began releasing videos portraying Somalia's struggle as part of a global movement to defend Islam and restore its rule. Foreign recruits were promised "victory or martyrdom" for enlisting.⁵³

Canada

Given developments across the border, it is not surprising that the disappearance of groups of Somali men in Canada would provoke high levels of suspicion. President Ahmed noted in November 2009 that a number of Somali-Canadian youth had gone missing from Canada, arguing that "it is exploitation against these youngsters, against their parents and against the Somali people to smuggle the youngsters whose understanding of their religion and the country is limited and whose parents escaped with them from Somalia in the first place to give them a better life." At the same time, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service was investigating six Somali-Canadians who left Toronto without telling their friends or parents. At least one phoned his family claiming to be in Kenya.⁵⁴

The experience of foreign recruits in the field

As with past foreign fighter insurgencies, while recruits may be able to slip out of their own countries to other states neighboring the war zone, it is another logistical matter to actually deliver the recruits to the insurgency and, prior to that, training and indoctrination camps. With the military forces of international organizations and hostile states patrolling the borders of Somalia, Al Shabaab has found a creative human smuggling solution: "The Shabaab are requesting the pirates to bring people in for them," [First Deputy Prime Minister] Ibrahim told *The Sunday Telegraph*, "Somalia's borders with neighboring countries are now tightly policed, so the only corridor for them is via the sea. The pirates smuggle them, and if anybody stops them, they just say they are passing fishermen."⁵⁵

Training and indoctrination methods

Somali Police Chief Abdi Hassan Awale reported that training camps along the Kenyan border are drawing an increasing number of recruits. "Most of the trainers are foreigners, including people from Western countries We do not know exactly how many there are, but we estimate hundreds." One former Al Shabaab fighter who parted ways with the group, Hassan Yare, "said life in the camps is austere. Recruits sleep on plastic sheets and sometimes eat only one meal a day—often maize cooked with water. Phones are confiscated. Recruits are only allowed to speak to their parents once every other Friday—Islam's holy day 'The message is simple,' one 18-year-old recruit noted, 'We are taught how the Western infidels want to eradicate pure Muslims, about how the U.S. government does nothing as Israel harasses our Muslim Palestinians.'" ⁵⁶

Foreign fighters, who serve as recruiters and paramilitary commanders, head jihadi training camps, where "recruits gather in scorching desert hideouts in Somalia, use portraits of President Barak Obama for target practice, learn how to make and detonate bombs, and vow allegiance to Osama bin Laden." One former member of Al Shabaab reported that "recruits are trained in intelligence matters and explosives." One Al Shabaab propaganda video depicted its members vowing allegiance to Al-Qaeda, and also training in camps, where they "leap over sandbags, crawled on the ground and fired targets under the gaze of light-skinned, bearded trainers," as well as calling President Ahmed a puppet of the West. ⁵⁷

"They woke before dawn to pray and study the Koran. They engaged in rigorous training, running obstacle courses and learning to make bombs. As foreign recruits, they received special treatment. These mujahidin slept in a different bunker and were considered to have a higher status." One recruit, "Mr. Hassan was struck by the diversity of the fighters, who included [Chechens] and converts from Europe. 'I am looking out into the field and I see so many different colors,' Mr. Hassan told [a] friend by phone." ⁵⁸

Influence on Al Shabaab operations

The Times reported in May 2009 that "up to a thousand" foreign fighters had joined the insurgency, with nearly 300 having arrived from Britain, the United States, Canada, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia in just the preceding two weeks, and at least 10 commanding the Somali Shabaab in Mogadishu and elsewhere. The foreigners, who were also fighting for the Hizb-al-Islam

faction, appeared to be guided by Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys. Aweys claimed that “there may be two or three Arabs who were moved by Islam to fight alongside us. But there is no large number of foreign Mujahidin in Mogadishu. We and the Arabs are all Muslims—so we are Arabs.”⁵⁹

Certainly the transnational character of the insurgency is evident in the fact that Al Shabaab was willing to put non-Somalis, such as Alabama-born Abu Mansoor al-Amriki, in both positions of military command and in internet recruitment videos aimed at their countrymen in the United Kingdom and United States in particular. Nicolas Bwakira, of the AMISOM, noted that the foreign fighters were bringing unprecedented resources and weapons into the Somali conflict through their transnational connections.⁶⁰

Additionally, “in most cases foreign fighters bring religious fervor helping to radicalize the bulk of disparate Al Shabaab militants, who fight mostly for money or under duress.” They have also introduced suicide bombings, inspired by jihadis in other civil conflicts. “There is no doubt that the foreign component of Al Shabaab is more extreme than those on the ground,” said Rashid Abdi, a Somalia analyst at the International Crisis Group, who added that the bulk of the militants were hired guns, not ideologues “There is a feeling now that Al Shabaab is ruled by foreign fighters; that they are dictating policy and this has all come about in the last couple of months [in early 2009].”⁶¹

In 2012, as AMISOM seized control of all major cities in the country, foreign fighters were significant parts of the rump of militants who held out until the last. Whether this was due to greater fervor or simply a constrained ability to flee the frontlines and blend in with the local population is unclear. The commander of AMISOM reported in February 2012 that 300 foreign fighters had fled Mogadishu and were attempting to cross to Yemen.⁶² That torn state and Nigeria were also described as potential destinations for Al-Amriki, who by this point was no longer recording videos to bring other Americans to Somalia but was instead releasing video blogs stating that his life was now in danger at the hands of some of his colleagues in Al Shabaab who had opposed his calls to strengthen ties with Al-Qaeda and who had been liberated by setbacks on the battlefield to seek personal revenge against their American leader.⁶³

Outside of Somalia

Elliot noted that “rookie recruits from the United States and Europe would seem to offer little but cannon fodder to their battle-hardened Somali counterparts. But Westerners bring the Al Shabaab prestige and possible financing from abroad. They also bring their passports—with which they could conceivably return to cities like Sydney, New York or London to carry out attacks.”⁶⁴

In 2009, Stratfor Intelligence offered that "Al-Shabab has proven that it is able to conduct regular attacks in southern Somalia, but thus far it has shown neither the capability nor the intent of hitting targets outside Somalia."⁶⁵ However, other observers noted that "Al-Shabab leaders have said that they see the continuation of jihad beyond Somalia as a religious imperative."⁶⁶ Indeed, group members did not wait for a resolution to the Somali conflict before turning their attentions elsewhere: Al Shabaab claimed credit for two simultaneous suicide bombings on 11 July 2010 that killed nearly eighty pub-goers who were watching the 2010 World Cup final at parties in Kampala. Group leaders described the attack, conducted in the hallmark manner of Al-Qaeda, as retribution for Uganda's military support for the TFG.⁶⁷

In August 2009, Australian police arrested four men with suspected links to Al Shabaab, charging that they planned to stage a suicide attack against an Australian military base. All four Melbourne residents were Australian citizens of Somali and Lebanese descent.⁶⁸ Federal Police Commissioner Tony Negus reported that "Members of the group have been actively seeking a fatwa or religious ruling to justify a terror attack on Australia," and that their attack would have been the most serious terrorist incident on Australian soil. Holsworthy Army Barracks outside of Sydney was apparently the group's main target. Prosecutors announced that they had evidence that some of the men had taken part in training and fighting in Somalia.⁶⁹ Ultimately three defendants, who had met and collaborated at the Preston Mosque in Melbourne, were convicted.⁷⁰

The Holsworthy plot appears to have been the first clear case of "blowback" against Western states as a result of Al Shabaab's transnational recruitment efforts. That the suspects included Lebanese-Australians among their number is evidence that recruiters have successfully reframed the conflict as a transnational struggle for Muslims rather than a national concern of Somalia. Indeed, this is not the first incident in which Lebanese-Australians apparently became foreign fighters abroad or plotted terror attacks in Australia.⁷¹ However, the convergence of the Somali and Lebanese diasporas in this instance indicates that the main import of the globalization of the conflict in Somalia may be, as with other civil wars from Algeria to Chechnya, the recasting of the conflict as an Islamist struggle with implications beyond Somali borders.

In another development, a Somali with a Danish residency permit, identified by authorities as having close ties to Al Shabaab, attempted in Denmark's second city of Aarhus to murder Kurt Westergaard, one of the illustrators who had drawn controversial cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad 5 years earlier.⁷² Prior to this he had reportedly met in Sweden with the Somali-Dane who had perpetrated a suicide bombing in Mogadishu days before the attack on the cartoonist. With the potential that other attacks might follow from diaspora

members in other Nordic communities, Farah Abdisamad, chairman of the Swedish Somali National Union, called for stricter laws against terrorism to prevent Al Shabaab's activity in Sweden.⁷³

Conclusions: Somalia as part of the foreign fighter trend

Although the willingness of Al Shabaab to put foreign recruits in positions of prominence on the battlefield and in recruitment videos appears to be a new development in transnational insurgency, the rest of the narrative of foreign fighter involvement is consistent with historical and other contemporary cases. Across a wide range of locations, historical periods, and issues of contention in the conflict, recruitment processes, and the behavior of the foreign fighters in the field have obeyed the same logics, and patterns are therefore discernible. But before those patterns become apparent, it is necessary to remove the foreign fighter recruits from the particulars of their circumstances. Put another way, neither the conflict in Somalia nor neo-fundamentalist Islam per se are responsible for the success of Al Shabaab in recruiting foreign fighters.

Who becomes a foreign fighter?

At least 20 percent of civil wars over the last 200 years have featured insurgencies that have succeeded in drawing volunteers from abroad. The foreign fighters have been adherents to all major Western religions, as well as Communists; have been co-ethnic with local insurgents or have had no shared ethnic ties; and, in half of the cases, did not all come from neighboring states and can therefore not be described as spillover or contagion of the civil conflict.⁷⁴ They have consistently been young men (average age in their early 20s), many of whom have been first or second generation immigrants (in the West), and who are highly active in transnational community organizations (whether ethnic, religious, or ideological) but are often disconnected from the broader civil society of their home states.⁷⁵

Tarrow notes that many transnational activists in contentious politics are what he terms “birds of passage,” who utilize the safety afforded by operating in a host country to organize campaigns of violence within their home states. Many are ethnic émigrés who have settled within diaspora communities abroad and, because they do not have to ultimately reach a *modus vivendi* with the

opposition, they are able to maintain extremely hard line positions that often do not keep pace with the views of the community in their homeland.⁷⁶

While this profile might seemingly explain the higher levels of violence perpetrated by the foreign fighters who have returned to Somalia, in this case the empirics do not support this explanation. Somali Al Shabaab recruits from the West went there as children, and appear to have been radicalized through mosques, community organizations, or under peer influence rather than at home. Instead of perpetual hardliners, they are (literally in the case of some of the non-Somalis) converts to the cause. How then were they recruited, and what inducements could explain their greater willingness than locals to kill and die for a strange land?

Recruitment as defensive mobilization

If there are not a great number of studies available on foreign fighters from which to draw, there is certainly no shortage of material on recruitment by terrorist organizations, transnational civil society activists, and other actors in contentious politics who seek to disseminate their messages and gain adherents to their causes. There is one common denominator in all of these appeals that is also demonstrably the basis for foreign fighter recruitment appeals: the necessity and duty of defending the target audience's identity group from some form of existential threat. As noted, Al Shabaab recruiters played heavily upon the occupation of their territory by ostensibly Christian Ethiopian troops and their alleged attacks against civilians, particularly women.

This approach is consistent with the strategy of other jihadi groups whose recruitment campaigns focus on threat, humiliation, and the need for redemption. Recruiters for these organizations attempt to depict the "West" emasculating Muslim men and humiliating Muslim women. "Muslim youth who spend time on the Internet are exposed to sophisticated videos from terrorist groups showing Muslims being killed . . . [they depict] a constant message that Islam is under attack. Your brothers and sisters are being killed. It's your duty to do something for them."⁷⁷

It is the fostered necessity of defensive action, out of both duty to the community and self-preservation, that is the motivator for Somali refugees and also for converts to Islam who join Al Shabaab. This response to a perceived existential threat is the reason for their greater savagery and self-sacrifice in combat. This has been the case in other Islamist insurgencies such as in Afghanistan, where, as opposed to the local Taliban, foreign fighters were

unwilling to surrender to the Northern Alliance,⁷⁸ and Iraq, where the foreign fighters constituted less than 10 percent of the insurgency against Coalition forces but were responsible for more than 90 percent of suicide bombings and high-lethality attacks.⁷⁹

However, it was also the case for the mostly Anglo-Saxon Protestant foreign fighters in the Mexican civil wars of the 1830s and of the predominantly Communist foreign recruits in the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s. Even the parameters of the community under threat are malleable, as recruiters in both of those instances switched their framing of the conflicts to try to attract broader pools of recruits.⁸⁰ As Al Shabaab recruiters are likewise strategic actors, they too can successfully define the conflict as a threat to Muslims or as the defense of the Somali homeland.

Innovative use of foreign fighters

Al Shabaab's leadership has also followed the classic pattern of publicly denying the presence of foreign fighters in an effort to maintain legitimacy among the populace it hopes to govern. In past cases of foreign-fighter recruitment, insurgencies that might have been eager to trumpet their transnational support and the formidability of foreign volunteers instead opt for preserving their image as "sons of the soil" who are not beholden to any foreign powers, or vulnerable without assistance from abroad. By downplaying the hundreds of foreign fighters it has recruited, Al Shabaab is certainly communicating this message in their public statements that are presumably accessible within Somalia.

It may therefore be counting on the lack of electronic communications infrastructure within the country to enable two innovations in its use of the recruits who do arrive in Somalia from the West. The first is the use of American and British recruits in internet productions designed along the lines of gangsta music videos or military recruitment commercials in their home countries, and in online video addresses to their fellow citizens at home urging them to join the struggle. The second is that these foreign recruits are, by all accounts, actually being placed in positions of command over local Somali members. The apparent effectiveness of this strategy runs contrary to other cases, in which divisions invariably arose between local and foreign insurgents. In recent major transnational insurgencies, local fighters and foreign mujahidin ended up engaged in their own battles, with both types of rebels viewing the other derisively⁸¹ or seeking to exploit national differences to exploit recruits from wealthier states.⁸²

Implications for the future of the conflict

Al Shabaab appears to have discovered a successful formula for having it both ways on foreign-fighter recruitment. Harkening back to their revanchist roots in the IU, its leaders can claim to the public that they are defending their homeland against an ARS that is the puppet of infidel Ethiopians and meddling Western powers, but then bypass average Somalis by use of the internet to glorify foreign fighters to potential recruits abroad. Given the success of the Islamists elsewhere, counter-insurgency planners in Somalia should be concerned with how to stop mobilization of foreign fighters who are responsible for higher levels of violence and the importation of illicit funds and arms.

Although critics have noted that the United Kingdom, Sweden, and other Western states are at a disadvantage in curtailing Al Shabaab recruitment because they have not declared the group to be a terror organization, past history indicates that these homeland security concerns will not prevent mobilization for Somalia. States that have been unable to halt unapproved immigration into their sovereign territory have proven even worse at preventing their own citizens from leaving as foreign fighters. The FBI was unable to prevent recruitment and transportation out of the United States by the Comintern during the Spanish Civil War even when there was a concerted effort to do so. Other attempts to obstruct mobilization, such as refusing to issue passports to Jews who it was feared would join the Haganah during the Israeli War of Independence, were similarly ineffective and distracted from anti-militancy efforts by creating entirely new grievances and civil rights violations.⁸³ Nor is blowback escapable by barring these individuals from returning—they will simply go elsewhere and become more deeply involved in the cause, as did the “Afghan Arabs” of the 1980s.

A long-term approach for preventing recruitment is to target likely recruits, based on their consistent profiles rather than any particular characteristics such as ethnicity or religion, for integration into and identification with their country of legal residence. This might be accomplished by fostering participation in civic programs so that the transnational identity used as the basis of recruitment is less salient than the norms of citizenship. In the meantime, the simple sophistication of Al Shabaab’s two-pronged approach to the transnationalization of its resources ensures that it will survive setbacks to return to fight another day in Somalia—or elsewhere.

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5

Somali piracy and international crime

Peter Lehr

With regard to Somalia, it is interesting that despite the absence of a central government for nearly two decades now, certain sectors of the Somalian industry continue to thrive—even outcompeting some of the more stable neighboring economies. The absence of a central government and, thus, state-enforced law and order, has also opened up completely new and not so legitimate business opportunities catering to the demands of customers living in a failed state. Examples include the black arms markets (the biggest one of which happens to be situated in Mogadishu) and human smuggling networks, transporting desperate Somalis by sea to destinations on the coasts of the Arabian peninsula. It has even led to a return of the age-old maritime crime of piracy, which had been virtually absent from the waters off Somalia for decades before the collapse of the Siad Barre government—the odd one-off incident notwithstanding.

Since the attempted hijack of the cruise liner *Seabourn Spirit* in November 2005, and especially in the wake of the successful hijackings of the French luxury yacht *Le Ponant*, the *M/V Faina* and the super tanker *Sirius Star* in 2008, scores of articles and opinion pieces have been published, usually highlighting the more spectacular aspects of this form of maritime crime such as the modus operandi of the pirates, the parachuting of huge sums of money down to the hijacked vessels, or the operations of naval special forces against some of the pirate gangs. What is still needed is a closer look from different angles at the underlying factors or “root causes” that led to a reemergence of piracy along the Somali coast.

Arguing from an International Political Economy (IPE) perspective, this chapter will examine the effects of globalization on the coastal parts of Somalia, especially the traditional inshore-fishing industry. The first part, on

the *challenges of globalization to Somalia*, will examine the consequences of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and (alleged) toxic waste-dumping in Somali waters on the coastal communities which depend on unrestricted access to maritime resources for their survival. It will demonstrate that these half-legal or blatantly illegal activities conducted by vessels of both European and Asian origin contributed considerably to the reemergence of piracy. However, it will also be argued that all these activities notwithstanding, it is nevertheless incorrect to describe Somali pirates as a kind of “maritime Robin Hoods”—as some media outlets prefer to depict them.¹

In a change of perspective, the chapter’s second part, on *challenges of Somali piracy to globalization*, will discuss how high-seas piracy off the Somali coast affects international shipping. It will be argued that action against piracy was taken only when it was “us” that came under attack (i.e. when ships on international voyage were attacked) as opposed to “them” in the shape of local and regional tramp ships and “coast huggers,” the attacks on the luxury yacht *Le Ponant* and the Saudi-Arabian super tanker *Sirius Star* in 2008 acting as pacemakers. Again, as in the first part, I will then step back to take a global view, demonstrating that Somalia is not the only problem region where coastal communities have to find responses to the onslaught of globalization—of which the current global economic meltdown just forms the newest facet.

Thus having demonstrated that Somalia may not be as unique a case it may look at first glance, the third part of this chapter will focus on responses to the problem of piracy: on the national level, the regional level, and the international level. It is quite right to argue that it is the prerogative as well as the duty of the coastal state afflicted by piracy to respond to this problem. However, failed states like Somalia and weak states such as the Philippines or Indonesia cannot possibly solve a problem posed by essentially transnational organized crime on their own. Thus, and not only in the case of Somalia, a similar combination of transnational forces that caused the problem in the first place now have to pool their resources in order to deal with it. However, since international or regional antipiracy operations are not capable of tackling the underlying root causes of it, national-level solutions need to be found as well—arguably difficult in a failed state such as Somalia, but necessary nevertheless, to prevent a spreading of the problem in a time of economic crisis.

The chapter will conclude with the somewhat bleak prediction that, in the case of Somalia, globalization’s chickens came back to roost, and that Somalia may well be a harbinger of a future where maritime transport will be less secure, and thus more expensive, than it was until the turn of the century: the root causes of economic inequality will not be addressed in the foreseeable future, and piracy as the current big issue will drop from the international

radar screens again, pushed aside by other stories, thus continuing to offer a powerful combination of push-and-pull factors for coastal communities fighting for survival.

Challenges: Globalization's impact on Somalia's coastal communities

Globalization, here rather simplistically defined as the free movement of goods, capital, and services plus ideas, does not only produce winners. Rather, there are scores of obvious and not-so-obvious losers. For example, the fledgling and largely agricultural economies of least-developed countries (LDC) are challenged by the practice of subsidizing farmers within the EU; while the work-forces of developed countries are negatively affected by the practice of "outsourcing" of scores of jobs to cheaper places. However, this chapter does not intend to offer a fundamental critique of globalization and liberalization of trade. Suffice it to say that globalization did not only come by way of legal movements of goods, capital, and services: a variety of shady, half-legal, and fully illegal businesses prospered as well under the "outburst" of globalization and liberalization following the cold war's end.

Somalia, which deteriorated into a failed state from the late 1980s onward,² suffered from several of those shady activities in the wake of globalization. With regard to Somalia's maritime sector, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing was one of those negative manifestations, while toxic waste dumping allegedly was the second one. The first one of those two negative manifestations, IUU, serves particularly well to explain the impact of globalization on Somali coastal dwellers in general and fishermen in particular—and also, by extension, to explain the rise of piracy in previously safe waters.

The intrusion of high sea trawlers into Somali fishing grounds³ which are considered one of the region's most important *Large Maritime Ecosystems* (LME),⁴ in itself is a consequence of the collapse of the Somali government in 1991, and the descent of Somalia into a civil war between ever-shifting alliances of clan-based militias led by powerful warlords: a loss of law and order at land also translates into a loss of law and order at sea—an area where maintaining any meaningful form of governance arguably is a more challenging task than on land anyway.⁵ As I have previously argued, the absence of law and order at sea presented itself as an opportunity for foreign fishing vessels to enter Somalia's territorial waters to fish for a variety of species such as tuna in the country's exclusive economic zone⁶:

Somali fishermen witnessed an increase in the number of foreign boats fishing illegally off the coast of southern Somalia. These foreign boats come from a variety of countries such as Belize (French or Spanish-owned purse seiners operating under a flag of convenience to avoid EU regulations); France (purse seiners targeting tuna); Honduras (EU purse seiners targeting tuna under a flag of convenience); Japan (longliners under license to Somaliland); Kenya (Mombasa-based trawlers); Korea (longliners targeting swordfish seasonally); Pakistan; Saudi Arabia; Spain (purse seiners targeting tuna); Sri Lanka (trawlers, plus longliners targeting shark under license to Somaliland and based at Berbera); Taiwan (longliners targeting swordfish seasonally); and Yemen (trawlers financed by a seafood importer in Bari, Italy).⁷

For the first decade after the collapse of the Somali government (1991–99), information collected by the Dutch nongovernmental organization Ocean Training and Promotion (OTP)⁸ suggests that “more than 200 foreign vessels had been engaged in illegal fishing along the Somali coastline.”⁹ Interestingly, in January 1998 a Taiwanese fishing fleet was apprehended in Somali waters and found to possess “licenses of dubious legality, written on ex-Somali government letterhead and signed by a warlord in Mogadishu claiming to represent the previous Barre government, and providing fishing access rights to demarcated areas of the Somali zone.”¹⁰ Obviously, illegal licensing was “a lucrative business for various coast-based warlords during this first decade, while illegal fishing was an even more lucrative business for foreign trawlers, worth approximately US\$300 million per year.”¹¹

Rather unsurprisingly, Somali fishing communities were the only party involved which did not prosper from these dubious arrangements.¹² Instead, they found themselves between the proverbial “rock and a hard place.” After approximately 200,000 jobs were lost and most of the Somali fishing fleet abducted by various militias¹³ following the collapse of the government, the remainder of the Somali fishing community was gradually pushed out of their own fishing grounds by foreign high sea fishing vessels venturing closer and closer inshore, thus depriving even small Somali inshore fishing boats of their catch. Also, various reports published in the late 1990s included circumstantial evidence for the use of universally prohibited fishing equipment by those intruders, “including nets with very small mesh sizes and sophisticated underwater lighting systems, thus turning the Somali seabed into a wasteland.”¹⁴ Furthermore, the reports also contained some evidence for the use of violence against Somali fishermen: equipment of Somali fishermen was reported to be “frequently destroyed by foreign trawlers, and some small Somali fishing boats have even been rammed by larger foreign vessels.”¹⁵

The exploitation of Somali fishing grounds by high sea trawlers either without any licenses or with fraudulent ones¹⁶ did not noticeably change during the second decade of Somalia's troubles. Attempts of the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia in September 2005 to interest outside powers in mandating an agency to police Somali waters until a Somali government would be able to do this on its own¹⁷ came to naught, and Somali waters continued to be fair game.

Even now, at the end of the second decade of the Somali civil war and the beginning of the third, "[very] sophisticated factory-style fishing-vessels, which were designed for distant-water fishing and travel from faraway countries, whose harbors are thousands of miles away from Somalia and whose own fisheries resources are either under tight legal protection or already drastically overexploited"¹⁸ continue to poach in the still "unprotected Somali waters"¹⁹—the risk posed by pirates notwithstanding: the revenues gained from these activities are simply too great, and high sea fishing is a risky business in any case. Andrew Mwangura, with some flourish, describes the catch these poachers are after:

They are in search of high-priced tuna, mackerel, swordfish, grouper, emperor, snapper, shark and of course the other valuable species in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. With impunity they rob rock-lobster and shrimps for the tables of the wealthiest in this world, and dolphins, sea turtles and sea-cucumbers for the deranged tastes of the Far East. They have diminished the extraordinary population of dugong to near extinction.²⁰

The loss of 200,000 jobs in Somalia's fishing sector and the abduction of the majority of all fishing vessels by diverse Somali militias after the collapse of the government are of course not attributable to the forces of globalization and liberalization of trade—these are home-made problems, probably typical for a civil war. However, the continuing IUU fishing activities in Somali waters under the noses of Western and non-Western warships on station to combat piracy most definitely is a consequence of globalization: the "free movement of goods" mentioned above seems to be mirrored by an equally free movement of actors—including high sea fishing fleets, themselves under increasing pressure to move ever farther away from their "normal" and now depleted hunting grounds, and to make ever more desperate efforts to fill their holds with fewer and fewer "high premium" fish such as blue fin tuna. This is not the context or occasion to discuss high sea fishing and the impact on the marine ecological system. But it should be noted that clashes akin to "fishery wars" could be observed even in well-governed North American and Western

European waters—the Icelandic Cod Wars of the 1950s to the 1970s are one example—and that high sea fishing more than ever is a “deadly business” indeed.²¹ With regard to IUU’s impact on Somalia, the already quoted Andrew Mwangura has the following to say:

Besides civil strife and outright war, the massive foreign fishing piracy, bringing criminal poaching and wanton destruction of the Somali marine resources for the last 19 years, may be one of the most damaging factors for the country, economically, environmentally and security-wise.²²

Typical for any illegal business, it is difficult to estimate the approximate value of fish poached in Somali waters. The only way to arrive at some estimates is to quantify the marine life along the coasts of Somalia. Here, Mwangura reminds us that “[surveys] by UN, Russian and Spanish assessors just before the collapse of the President Barre regime in 1991 estimated that at least 200,000 tons of fish per year could be harvested sustainably by both artisanal and industrial fisheries, . . . Australian scientists put this figure to at least 300,000 tons.”²³ Seen against the backdrop of depleted waters elsewhere, it is easy to see why Somali waters—under-exploited by their own fishing communities due to the civil war, and thus, an absence in proper marine management/exploitation—is such an important and tempting area for high sea trawlers, despite the risk of piracy. Still, since we do not really know how high the annual tonnage of fish poached is, all we can do is to stick with the estimate for the first decade, which was US\$300 million per year and seems to be a rather conservative estimate by now.

Because of the economic as well as ecological damage of IUU in Somali waters, Mwangura even goes so far—and for good reasons in this author’s opinion—to compare this activity with piracy, calling IUU “pirate fishing.” Piracy will be examined in more detail in the next section, but the parallels Mwangura sees between “piracy” and “pirate fishing” are quite interesting:

While biased UN resolutions, big power orders and news reports continue to condemn the hijackings of merchant ships by Somali pirates in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, pirate fishing was and is ignored. Why are the UN resolutions, NATO orders and EU decrees to invade the Somali seas persistently failing to include the protection of the Somali marine resources from IUU violations in the same waters?²⁴

IUU, however, is probably not the only problem for Somalia’s coastal population: there are allegations that Somali waters are also used for the dumping of toxic waste. In a globalized world in which all sorts of goods

are moving freely, the “export” of industrial or toxic waste from countries of the developed world to less developed far away shores emerged as yet another manifestation of big business—and mostly not even an illegal one: the bulk of toxic waste exports are done with permission of the governments and administrations of receiving countries which simply see it as yet another source of revenue.

This was originally also the case with regard to Somalia, which means toxic waste dumping at least on the Somali mainland is not a new phenomenon. Rather, it can be traced back to the 1990s when a Somali state-owned company “imported” industrial waste from Swiss and Italian companies to be disposed of in Somali dumps, allegedly among the world’s largest. Nick Nuttall, spokesperson of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), confirmed this in an Al Jazeera interview in October 2008:

“Somalia has been used as a dumping ground for hazardous waste starting in the early 1990s, and continuing through the civil war there”. . . . European companies found it to be very cheap to get rid of the waste, costing as little as \$2.50 a tonne, where waste disposal costs in Europe are something like \$1000 a tonne. And the waste is many different kinds. There is uranium radioactive waste. There is lead, and heavy metals like cadmium and mercury. There is also industrial waste, and there are hospital wastes, chemical wastes—you name it.²⁵

The aftermath of the Boxing Day tsunami of 2004 led to fears that toxic waste was also dumped at sea during and even after the collapse of the Barre regime. One article, for example, claims that “rusting tanks of unidentifiable ooze were washed up on to beaches; villagers began to die of unexplained illnesses and coastal ecosystems collapsed.”²⁶

Although a quick and rather perfunctory (due to the security situation) UNEP investigation in 2005 indeed discovered containers with toxic waste at the shores of Puntland, and another investigation conducted by a Somali NGO found several containers with nuclear waste along the shores of other parts of Somalia,²⁷ the findings are inconclusive: these containers could have been washed ashore during the tsunami, and could have traveled some distance. Based on later investigations of a Somali NGO the name of which was withheld for security reasons, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, UN’s Special Representative for the region, still confirmed continued dumping along Somalia’s coast.²⁸ As Milton’s report on the issues points out, Ould-Abdallah “[likened] the situation to the shipping of blood diamonds from Liberia and Sierra Leone.”²⁹ At the moment however, it is safer to conclude with the UNEP spokesperson Nick Nuttall, who said in 2008:

We [the UNEP] had planned to do a proper, in-depth scientific assessment on the magnitude of the problem. But because of the high levels of insecurity onshore and off the Somali coast, we are unable to carry out an accurate assessment of the extent of the problem.

Having said that, at least some pirate groups justified their actions with the criminal practice of toxic waste dumping, claiming that the ransoms they demand are nothing but “reacting to the toxic waste that has been continually dumped on the shores of our country for nearly 20 years.”³⁰ Thus, it is fair to argue that from a Somali perspective, especially a Somali coastal population one, the forces of globalization manifested themselves rather negatively in the shape of illegal fishing and toxic waste dumping, forcing Somali actors to respond to these challenges.

Responses: Somali piracy’s impact on the maritime transport sector

As I have argued elsewhere, “[for] many Somalis, especially marine experts and coastal dwellers, the current problem of piracy began when foreign fishing boats started invading the country’s fishing grounds after the fall of the Somali government in early 1991.”³¹ The bitter and at times violent conflict between high sea trawlers and Somali inshore fishing boats as a result of these intrusions had some unforeseen consequences:

[Learning] their deadly trade struggling for their own economic survival against powerful, aggressive, and technically more sophisticated foreign competition, some Somali fishermen gradually turned from fighting against encroaching foreign fishing vessels to preying on commercial shipping in what they perceive to be their waters. Equipped with speedboats and an array of light weapons such as assault rifles and RPGs, the young fishermen quickly realized that commercial cargo ships were much easier targets than foreign trawlers similarly equipped with assault rifles and RPGs.³²

An incident of 15 August 2005 is indicative for the self-perception of pirate groups of the initial, first wave of piracy emanating from Somali shores. On that day, three Taiwanese high seas trawlers were captured by a group of pirates while conducting fishing operations in Somalia’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The vessels were forced to make for an island some 30 sea miles south of Kismaayo where the 48 crew members of Taiwanese, Chinese, Indonesian, and Vietnamese origin were held hostage. What is of particular

interest here is the pirates' declared rationale behind the hijacking as well as the ransom demands—US\$5,000 for each of the crew members:

First, the pirate gang declared themselves to be the National Volunteer Coast Guard of Somalia; second, they explained that the National Volunteer Coast Guard had "impounded" the trawlers for illegal fishing in Somali waters; and third, that they had imposed a fine of US\$5,000 on each of the crew members for the act of poaching in Somali waters.³³

Their efforts to declare themselves protectors of their "own" waters should not simply be dismissed as grandstanding by individual pirate captains without any further thought, and names such as *Somali Marines*, *Central Marines* or *National Volunteer Coastguard of Somalia* are more than pure irony. As I argued elsewhere, "some pirate groups emerging in the early 1990s actually were formed on the behest of warlords controlling coastal areas in order to defend Somali maritime interests after the downfall of the central government and the disappearance of the 'official' Somali Navy."³⁴ Thus, "there may just be a kernel of truth behind these publicity stunts, and a sliver of political motivation behind the criminal acts."³⁵ Although this is sheer speculation in the absence of hard evidence, it can be said that this first wave of pirates mainly consisted of Somali fishermen and other coastal dwellers, reacting to the challenges posed by globally acting industrial fishing fleets—and changing in the process.

I hasten to add that while the theme of defending their own waters may have been credible for the first wave of Somali pirates, for the current wave it is not. In my opinion, the current wave of high seas piracy started in the wake of the successful hijacking of the French luxury yacht *Le Ponant* in spring 2008. This attack was the first highly publicized one³⁶ which netted a ransom in the millions of US dollars, not "only" hundreds of thousands: the owners of the luxury yacht paid no less than US\$ 2 million to get their crew and their vessel back. Although ransoms of anything between US\$250,000 and \$500,000 certainly are nothing to scoff at, this two-million-dollar ransom at the end of a highly publicized event resulted in a Somali version of the Californian gold rush, or, more appropriately for maritime affairs, in a "feeding frenzy": scores of young Somali militiamen flocked to the shores to try and go "a-pirating" as well.³⁷

The immediate effect of this influx of young Somalis from interior parts of Somalia was a change in the composition of pirate groups: now, at least the larger and better organized pirate groups consisted of a core of fishermen who provided the mariner skills necessary to navigate far off their own shores, and a larger part of militiamen providing the military "muscles" also necessary for

the business of piracy. As it stands at the moment, there are even reports of so-called *pirate action groups* (PAG) with no noticeable mariner skills whatsoever, unable for example to use currents and tides to their advantage and simply steering a straight course at a target as indicated by their GPS. This points at the presence of more or less “amateurish” landlubbers turned pirates without the nautical support of individuals with a maritime background.³⁸

Although some PAG still maintain that all they do is defend their own waters, this is no longer credible at all—if one accepts that there was some credibility in the first generation of pirate’s claims, that is. As of today, Somali pirate groups attack vessels not in their own waters—defined as either the non-declared EEZ or Somalia’s sovereign waters—but at high sea, up to 1,500 nautical miles off their own shores. Even some of Al Shabaab’s spokespersons, such as Sheikh Muqtar Robow (aka Abu Mansur), claim that the pirates are in reality “mujahedeen at sea,” fighting against “Western infidels and crusaders,” cannot really draw attention away from the fact that now, it is all about money: “grievance” gave way to “greed,” as Paul Collier would probably argue.³⁹ What matters more in this context, however, is the challenge this new breed of pirates pose to maritime trade—the one sector probably profiting the most from globalization and liberalization of trade if one remembers that about 80 percent of all goods are transported by sea.

By comparing the first wave of pirates—that is those active before the watershed-attack on the *Le Ponant* in 2008—with the new, post-*Le Ponant* generation, and leaving aside the contentious “greed versus grievance” debate for a moment, several interesting observations can be made. First, the first wave of pirates attacked their targets nearer to their own shores, in areas approximately equivalent to what could have been Somalia’s EEZ, with an initial reach of up to 150–200 nautical miles. The *M/V Semlow*, for example, a vessel chartered by the UN World Food Program and carrying 850 tons of rice destined for Mogadishu was attacked on 27 June 2005 about 30 nautical miles off the city; while the cruise liner *Seabourn Spirit* came under attack on 5 November that year roughly 100 nautical miles off the Banaadir coast. Striking nearer their own coasts facilitated the pirates’ operations, but also restricted the target selection to smaller and older vessels, or “tramp ships” destined for Mogadishu, Mombasa, or other regional East African ports. Thus, in a very cynical way of speaking, it was not “us” who came under attack and had to pay ransom to the pirates—“us” defined as international shipping transiting the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea for destinations in Europe, Northern America, or the Asia-Pacific. Since the first wave of Somali pirates only attacked “them,” defined as regional shipping such as the vessels of the Kenyan Motaku Shipping agency, they did not really impinge on the security of “our” sea lines of communication (SLOC). Thus, they were seen

as of “nuisance value” only, and all that was needed to protect “our” interests was steering clear of the Somali coast: originally, the advice was keeping 100 nautical miles distance, later to be increased to 150 nautical miles, and then to 200 nautical miles. The very few high-profile attacks on Western shipping, such as the unsuccessful one on the *Seabourn Spirit*, were seen as aberrations, or as attempted acts of maritime terrorism.⁴⁰

The audacious attack on the *Le Ponant* on 4 April 2008 finally drove home the message that it was no longer only “them” but also “us” who were targeted by the pirates: our vessels, our crews, our cargoes, our interests. As I pointed out in another article,⁴¹ the fact that the pirates netted a ransom of two million US\$ did not go unnoticed—neither by international media covering the story, nor by Somali militia men, clan fighters, and fishermen. In short, this act of piracy resulted in a kind of Somali “gold rush,” or “feeding frenzy” (to use a more appropriate maritime simile): scores of willing recruits—young militia- and fishermen in the age-range of 20–35 years—flocked to the pirates’ lairs to get a piece of the action, and a share of the booty. As a result, the frequency of acts of piracy—both successful and unsuccessful—rose from one or two attacks per month to several attacks per week. As of January 2013, Somali pirates’ milestones include the attack on the main battle tank-carrying *MV Faina* (captured: 25 September 2008, released: 6 February 2009, and reported ransom: US\$3.2 m), the Saudi super tanker *Sirius Star* (captured: 15 November 2008, released: 9 January 2009, and reported ransom: US\$3 m), the liquefied natural gas (LNG) tanker *MV Longchamp* (captured: 29 January 2009, released: 28 March 2009, and undisclosed amount of ransom paid), the German-owned *Hansa Stavanger* (captured: 3 April 2009, released: 3 August 2009, and reported ransom: US\$2.7 m), the US-flagged *Maersk Alabama* (captured on 8 April 2009, successful rescue operation of the US Navy SEALs), the container ship *MV Kota Wajar* (captured: 15 October 2009, released: 28 December 2012, and reported ransom: US\$4 million), the tanker *MV Maran Centaurus* (captured: 30 November 2009, released: 19 January 2010, and reported ransom: between US\$5.5–7 million), the tanker *MV Al Nisr al Saudi* (captured: 3 March 2010, released: 7 December 2010, and undisclosed amount of ransom paid), the super tanker *MV Samho Dream* (captured: 4 April 2010, released: 6 November 2010, and reported ransom US\$9.5 million), the chemical tanker *MV Golden Blessing* (captured: 28 June 2010, released: 6 November 2010, and reported ransom: US\$2.8 million), the super tanker *MV Irene SL* (captured: 9 February 2011, released: 8 April 2011, and reported ransom: US\$13.5 million), the cargo vessel *MV Sinar Kudus* (captured: 16 March 2011, released: 1 May 2011, and reported ransom: US\$9 million), the tanker *MT Gemini* (captured: 30 April 2011, released: 3 December 2011, and reported ransom: US\$10 million), the tanker *MT Fairchem Bogy* (captured: 20 August

2011, released: 12 January 2012, and reported ransom: US\$8 million), and the roll on/roll off (RORO) vessel *MV Leila* (captured: 21 February 2012, released: 10 April 2012, and reported ransom: US\$2 million).

This somewhat longish but by far not exhaustive list of ships captured or attacked by Somali pirates reinforces the message that any vessel can now be considered fair game if the conditions for an attack are right: this includes chemical tankers, product tankers, super tankers, LNG carriers, container vessels, and general cargo ships. Not mentioned here are the fishing vessels⁴² which fell prey to Somali pirates well outside of Somalia's undeclared EEZ, small regional vessels such as dhows and private yachts. The list is also indicative of the ransoms now demanded by the pirates, which are firmly in the million dollar range, even reaching and surpassing the US\$ 10 million mark on occasion.

When it comes to assessing the financial damage to the maritime sector, the ransoms that have to be paid out to the pirates are only the tip of the proverbial iceberg. To calculate the financial impact of Somali piracy—Somali high sea piracy, to be precise—one has to figure in the indirect costs of piracy, such as rising insurance costs for voyages through the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden, legal costs, costs for intermediaries and private security firms, costs for the protection of individual vessels, or, alternatively, costs for rerouting slower and thus more vulnerable vessels such as super tankers. Still, there are many figures bandied around, reaching from conservative US\$7 billion to a not-so-conservative US\$12 billion. An interesting and rather convincing study from the consultancy *Geopolicy* estimates that in 2015, the overall costs of piracy will reach the astonishing amount of US\$15 billion.⁴³

However, this manifestation of the age-old maritime crime does not only affect the maritime sector via financial costs: although only about 1.3 percent of all ships voyaging through the Somali Basin come under attack, and although an even lesser percentage actually gets hijacked by a pirate action group, the *psychological* impact on seafarers is immense. A crew member on board of a vessel entering this piracy hotspot simply does not know for sure whether he or she will remain unaffected. For this reason, some seafarer associations already threatened to boycott ships bound for the Gulf of Aden and adjacent waters. At the end of April 2011 for example, a newspaper report quoted Indian maritime unions as follows:

There is a strong possibility that a collective international boycott by the seafarers coming from the labor-supplying countries like the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Russia, Bangladesh, etc. is round the corner, they said.

"Shipowners and seafarers have been left to fend for themselves without any worldwide government support," the heads of the National Union of

Seafarers of India, Maritime Union of India and Indian National Shipowners Association said.⁴⁴

As the article also pointed out, this should be seen as a direct response to warning of the Somali Transitional Federal Government's foreign minister on 18 April 2011 at a counterpiracy conference in Dubai "that the world was losing the battle against the pirates."⁴⁵ Thus, it can be argued that the Somali pirates successfully turned the tables on the forces of globalization: they now inflict far higher economic damage than that caused by IUU and, probably, toxic waste dumping. Actually, one could even argue that they countered the "cut-throat capitalism" as allegedly embodied in globalization and liberalization of trade with their own brand of "cut-throat capitalism."⁴⁶

Consequences: "From the sea, to the shores" in a new setting

In the face of this new threat, and after having ignored the wave of piracy in Somali waters for nearly a decade, the international community, especially the European Union and NATO, reacted in 2008 by securitizing⁴⁷ this so far purely criminal activity. As Tsvetkova convincingly argues,

Somali piracy has gained the status of an international security issue because of its damaging impact on oil supplies to Western states and not because of its relationship with state failure in Somalia, the region, breeding ground for terrorism or human security.⁴⁸

Tsvetkova is quite right to point out two major drivers behind the decision to treat the criminal threat of piracy as a security threat impinging on the security of major SLOC leading through the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea—a threat with the potential to disrupt the lifelines of our economies: oil security⁴⁹ as driver number one, and the potential nexus between the pirates and the Somali pro-Al-Qaeda insurgent group Al Shabaab as driver number two.

With regard to the first driver, the attack on the *Le Ponant* in 2008 may well have changed the rules of the game, but it was the attack on the super tanker *MV Sirius Star* in the autumn of the same year which had a serious ripple effect both in Saudi Arabia as the oil producer affected by the hijack and Western economies as the end users of Middle Eastern crude oil. If there are any strategic goods worth mentioning which are shipped via the SLOCs of the Indian Ocean, it is crude oil and natural gas—a fact that also did not escape the notice of Osama bin Laden, who exhorted his followers several times to

strike at the West's supply of crude oil. The hijack of the *Sirius Star*, and later of other super tankers, demonstrated how easy it was to attack them—hence the jitters in the industry in the wake of the *Sirius Star* hijack.

This leads directly to the second driver: the possible nexus between the Somali pirates and Al Shabaab.⁵⁰ Although, at the time of writing, this is still sheer speculation, the author agrees that a cooperation between the pirates and Al Shabaab would enable the latter—and, by extension, Al-Qaeda⁵¹—to strike against Western interests at sea by providing them with an “instant” maritime capability. At least some of Al Shabaab's spokespersons already praised their pirate brothers as “mujahideen because they are at war with the Christian countries,”⁵² defending “the coast against Allah's enemies.”⁵³ As discussed above, some pirate groups already used the (unwelcome) publicity in the wake of a high-profile attack to declare themselves defenders of their own waters against foreign encroachments. Taking Al Shabaab's hint and ostentatiously fighting for a bigger cause in the name of a maritime Jihad against the West would provide the pirates with some sort of “semi-official” sanction. Declaring themselves Mujahideen could thus be in the interest of Somalia's pirate action groups, at least those operating in Al Shabaab's zone of influence. Therefore, even though Ignatieff is quite right to argue that “[there] will always be a gap between those who take the political goals seriously and those who are drawn to the cause because it offers glamour, violence, money, and power,”⁵⁴ there is considerable scope for a further politicization of Somali pirates, and a gradual move toward political piracy.⁵⁵ That would be piracy still carried out mainly for financial gain, but for political ends as well—as serious or as imaginary as they may be. In a very ironic sense, this would be a development bordering at a “securitization from below” (i.e. Somali pirates turning into quasi political or “hybrid” actors) in a response to the “securitization from above” (i.e. regional and international organizations declaring this criminal enterprise a threat to their security).

For the pirates, the securitization of the threat posed by them had far-reaching consequences. It prompted the European Union, NATO, and the United States as well into action. In this context, the above-mentioned pirate attack on the *Maersk Alabama*—the first US vessel targeted by pirates since the end of the Barbary Coast wars of the early nineteenth century—is noteworthy not only for the successful antipiracy operation which ended it. Rather, it was largely responsible for convincing the newly inaugurated US administration of President Obama that resolute and robust action was needed to combat this new manifestation of piracy as the “old enemy”—just when everybody seemed to be waiting for the “new enemy” in the shape of maritime terrorists to emerge. This US attention guaranteed the continuation of multinational antipiracy operations launched under the impression of the

Sirius Star hijacking of Autumn 2008, among them the newly formed NATO Combined Task Force (CTF) 151, the NATO Operations Allied Provider and Ocean Shield, and EU Operation Atalanta. Also, the most recent wave of piracy resulted in a flurry of diplomatic action such as the passing of several further UN resolutions, the formation of a UN Contact Group tasked to coordinate antipiracy efforts, and the signing of bilateral agreements between several Western states and Kenya and the Seychelles in order to bring apprehended pirates to justice.⁵⁶

Furthermore, a regional-based antipiracy patrol conducted by Arab states under the lead of Saudi Arabia is under discussion at the time of writing on an “on again, off again” basis.⁵⁷ As the case of the Malacca Strait Patrol (MSP)⁵⁸ in Southeast Asia shows, pooling one’s scarce resources with those of one’s neighbors suffering from the same problem makes eminent sense: the joint antipiracy patrols of Indonesian, Malaysian, Singaporean, and Royal Thai Navy vessels led to a considerable decrease of piratical acts—both with regard to overall numbers as well as in severity of such attacks: from gun-point (organized piracy) back to knife-point (opportunistic piracy), so to speak.⁵⁹ Even more importantly with regard to long-term solutions to piracy, efforts are made to train and equip a Somali naval force and coast guard to be based in the more secure parts of the war-torn country. The intention here is to empower Somalis to reestablish a modicum of law and order at sea by themselves.

Finally, the possibility of establishing tailor-made regional piracy tribunals is currently being discussed⁶⁰—in a tacit acknowledgment that the current cobbled-together agreements with Kenya and the Seychelles to bring arrested pirates to justice does not match the lofty aims of Western human rights conventions, while also overwhelming the capacity of those states’ judicial systems. As such, enough initiatives to combat piracy seemed to be in place to make life more difficult for pirates: short-term “quick-fix” solutions such as the various armadas patrolling the dangerous waters or the agreements with Kenya and the Seychelles to bring pirates to justice; medium-term solutions such as the Arabian antipiracy task force; and long-term solutions to address the root causes of piracy at land by way of reestablishing law and order at least in parts of Somalia.

In addition to those official state responses, the maritime sector also started to find ways to harden their vessels against pirate attacks, after initially having been quite reluctant to do so due to the high costs associated with protective measures, be they passive or active. Whether some shippers like it or not, outfitting vessels with at least passive security devices such as rolls of razor wire, keeping antipiracy watch all the time in basically the whole of the Northern Arabian Sea, and staying close to warships—that is sailing in a convoy—may well be the order of the day. Also, employing armed security

guards or even escort vessels from private security firms may well make sense at least for vessels transporting high-value cargo—although such active security measures are quite an expensive solution, and thus only feasible for vessels carrying high-value cargo.

Yet another option under discussion is forming “specially trained security teams from the ship’s crew, led by a highly trained licensed officer.”⁶¹ As I have argued elsewhere, many seafarers’ organizations and bodies such as IMO still are rather opposed to such an option for a variety of good reasons:

Consider a ship under a flag of convenience, for example. Firstly, such vessels tend to be rather economically manned: there are just enough crew members to carry out the usual tasks involved in operating a ship, but hardly enough to maintain proper anti-piracy watches. How could such over-worked crews find the time for weapons-training? And why should they be prepared to defend their ship in the first place as long as there still is a decent chance to survive an attack when offering no resistance? Also, nobody would be too keen to start a gun battle on board of a tanker carrying aviation fuel (although this happened once in the Straits of Malacca) or chemicals or ammonium nitrate or any other hazardous material.⁶²

However, under the persistent threat of Somali piracy, some ship owners seem to reassess the risks involved in arming sailors. The *Washington Times* for example reported the following:

Many ship owners appreciate that armed crews would protect their ships, cargo and personnel. In May 5 [2009] Senate testimony, Philip J. Shapiro, chief executive officer of Liberty Maritime Corp., said: “In light of the recent threats to U.S. merchant mariners, we respectfully request that Congress consider clearing the obstacles that currently block ship owners from arming our vessels.”⁶³

However this debate will end, it is clear that a wide array of public and private sector antipiracy measures are being put in place, covering anything from short-term to medium-term to long-term solutions. The dramatic decrease of successful attacks since mid-2011 indicates that these active and passive security measures are largely successful: although it still can be said that occasionally, current short-term solutions in the shape of naval patrols on station still seem to be out-manuevered by a lucky pirate action group, it seems to be only a question of time until Somali pirates are either chased out of the waters or at least reduced to raiding coast huggers near their own shores as they did in the first decade.

Unfortunately, and despite warning voices, current measures initiated for the purpose of gradually turning the so-called *Somali Basin* as part of the Arabian Sea into safe waters again are mainly geared toward combating piracy at sea, and it still remains to be seen whether the extension of Atalanta's brief to combat pirates on the shores as well will be successful. However, apart from this extension and from long-term plans to establish Somali coast guards, or at least functioning coast guards in Somaliland and Puntland, nothing much is done at sea to curb the intrusions of high sea trawlers into the Somali EEZ, or even into Somali sovereign waters. Allegedly, even toxic waste dumping is still going on—although at the moment, there is still no firm evidence to corroborate such claims.

Against the backdrop of IUU and (alleged) toxic waste dumping, it is more than obvious that fighting piracy is only one side of the coin when it comes to addressing the roots of what essentially is a maritime law and order problem. As the author argued above, the trigger for the waves of piracy emanating from Somali shores was the collapse of maritime law and order in the wake of the collapse of law and order at land. Reestablishing law and order at sea as requested by some international bodies such as the United Nations and IMO would offer Somali coastal dwellers a choice. Of course, hard core pirates who got rich with attacks on Western shipping throughout the last 5 years are unlikely to take the chance to return to or start a life as fishermen. Thus, the scourge of piracy will not vanish overnight. But the "hangers-on" in the shape of part-time pirates could be gradually weaned away. In the medium to long term, a new generation of Somali fisher folks could emerge, and the comparatively recent phenomenon of Somali high sea piracy could slowly fade away.

At the moment, this is wishful thinking: first of all, one should remember that those two European nations which were at the forefront of the call for naval operations against pirates also happen to be those with the biggest interest in high sea fishing in Somali waters: France and Spain. Any genuine effort to curb IUU would thus impinge on their economic interests. Secondly, at least one effort to set up a coast guard on Somali territory—the one made in Puntland—seems to be rather flawed from the outset: this particular coast guard will be staffed not by Somalis, but by foreign contractors—most of them allegedly mercenaries of South African origin.⁶⁴ Whether these foreigners have the empathy necessary to deal with the locals remains to be seen—but somehow I doubt it. Rather, it can be expected that these operators will aggravate the problem instead of solving it.⁶⁵ And thirdly, a thorough solution of the piracy problem along Somalia's coasts ultimately depends on reestablishing law and order at land—that is, turning Somalia from a failed state into a functioning state. But this does not seem to be in the cards for the foreseeable future.

Conclusion: Where next?

As demonstrated, a special combination of push-and-pull factors resulted in turning the previously (i.e., pre-1991) safe coasts of Somalia into a veritable paradise for pirates—and into a “safe haven” from which pirates could strike on the high sea against international shipping, inflicting huge financial and psychological costs. Interestingly, as well as alarmingly, circumstantial evidence hints at a certain presence of Yemeni fishermen on board some of the pirate vessels active in the Arabian Sea. Yemen is not a failed state yet—but is not that far away from turning into one. Thus, it can be argued that a very similar enabling environment could emerge along Yemen’s shores: an absence of law and order, warlords and militias fighting against each other in ever shifting alliances, followed by an intrusion of outsiders into Yemeni waters. A wave of pirates emanating from Yemeni shores would put any ship sailing through the Bab el-Mandeb into the proverbial spot “between a rock and a hard place,” or, more appropriately given the maritime setting, between “Scylla and Charybdis.”

Likewise, there is a surge of piracy in Western African waters, for example in the Gulf of Guinea, which is no longer tied to a variety of insurgent movements such as the Movement on the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). This new wave of piracy can also be explained along very similar lines as Somali piracy: toxic waste dumping in some of the Western African waters, and the presence of industrial fishing fleets depleting coastal waters. Throw in endemic poverty along the coasts, and corruption as well, and you find quite a formidable “enabling environment” conducive to piracy as well.

The same observations can be made for most parts of maritime Southeast Asia: in the Straits of Malacca and in parts of the South China Sea, acts of piracy seem to be on the increase again. So far, there are no high-profile cases of shipjackings as in the case of Somalia—the bulk of the cases reported are in the category of *medium level armed assault and robbery* (MLAAR),⁶⁶ that is, acts of boarding during which the contents of the ship’s safe are plundered and the crew’s valuables taken. If Southeast Asian pirates were to return to shipjackings—they did so during the 1990s and early 2000s—these would be far more sinister than the Somali variant: in the absence of safe havens where hijacked ships could be anchored until ransom had been paid, these pirates went for the cargo and the vessel itself—not for the crew, which was thus redundant, and sometimes thrown overboard without further ado, or simply murdered. Here, over-fishing of many Southeast Asian waters can be blamed on the one hand, and some regional states’ lackadaisical view to endemic poverty among coastal populations “living a marginalized lifestyle,” as Adam Young convincingly argued,⁶⁷ on the other.

Thus, and seen against the backdrop of the current global economic crisis, it is probably fair to say that in the next few years, we are more likely to see a further increase of piracy than its demise.

Notes

- 1 See for example (but with dismissive undertones) The Economist, "Anarchy in Somalia: The lawless Horn. Pirates are only part of a much bigger problem in east Africa," *The Economist*, 20 November 2008, accessed 3 January 2013, http://www.economist.com/node/12637009?story_id=12637009. The myth of Somali pirates being 'Robin Hoods' has been discussed and dismissed in Ole W. Pedersen, "Are Somali Pirates Mere Robin Hoods?" *International Law Observer* 23 April 2009, accessed 3 January 2013, <http://www.internationallawobserver.eu/2009/04/23/are-somali-pirates-mere-robin-hoods/>.
- 2 The collapse of the Siad Barre regime in January 1991 was neither the beginning nor the end of this protracted process.
- 3 The importance of Somalia's fishing grounds for coastal populations are described for example in P. J. Fielding and B. Q. Mann, "The Somalia Inshore Lobster Resource: A Survey of The Lobster Fishery of the North Eastern Region (Puntland) Between Foar and Eyl During November 1998," *IUCN Eastern Africa Programme, Somali Natural Resources Management Programme*, June 1999, accessed 3 January 2013, <http://www.mballi.info/doc206.htm>; and in Kenneth Sherman, Ezekiel M. Okemwa and Micheni J. Ntiba (eds), *Large Marine Ecosystems of the Indian Ocean: Assessment, Sustainability, and Management* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Science 1998).
- 4 Richard M. Auty, "How Natural Resources Affect Economic Development," *Development Policy Review* 18:4 (2000), 347–64. Accessed 3 January 2013, doi: 10.1111/1467-7679.00116.
- 5 Hence the epithet "lawless sea."
- 6 It should be noted that due to the collapse of the government, Somalia never officially declared its 200 nautical miles EEZ as per the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS). However, Ecoterra International forcefully makes the point that "Somalia had declared and never given up" the rights and protection mechanisms of an EEZ as per UNCLOS, and that since 2009, Somalia even has a Continental Shelf Zone of 350 nautical miles—a claim that was "documented and handed in by Somalia on 17 April 2009 to the UN and the International Seabed Authority before the deadline of 13 May 2009"; see Ecoterra International, "Somalia: The untruths about piracy," *Ecoterra International* Issue 500, 20 October 2010, accessed 3 January 2013, <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/67791>.
- 7 Peter Lehr and Hendrick Lehmann, "Somalia – Pirates' New Paradise," in Peter Lehr (ed.), *Violence at Sea: Piracy in the Age of Global Terrorism* (London and New York: Routledge 2011), 12.
- 8 One of OTP's aims is "to support needy Somali communities in fisheries development (Infrastructures, capacity building and marine resources conservation)," www.somali-civilsociety.org/partners/partner_oceanp.php.

- 9 Lehr and Lehmann, "Somalia – Pirates' New Paradise," 12.
- 10 Scott Coffen-Smout, as quoted in Lehr and Lehmann, "Somalia – Pirates' New Paradise," 12.
- 11 Lehr and Lehmann, "Somalia – Pirates' New Paradise," 12.
- 12 Some authors dismissed the importance of fish for the Somali coastal population, claiming that Somalis being herdsmen, they would eschew sea food in general and drawing on interviews mainly conducted in Mogadishu. For parts of the coastal dwellers, that may well be so: during the drought of 1973/1974, the Somali government attempted to retrain nomadic herdsmen to fishermen, albeit without success; see Robert K. Hitchcock and Hassan Hussein, "Agricultural and non-agricultural settlements for drought-afflicted pastoralists in Somalia." *Disasters* 11:1 (1987), 30–9. This, however, should not be generalized to erroneously claim that the Somali coastal population as a whole eschews sea food such as fish or lobster.
- 13 See Andrew Mwangura, "Somalia: Pirates or Protectors?," *AllAfrica.com*, 20 May 2010, accessed 3 January 2013, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201005200856.html>.
- 14 Lehr and Lehmann, "Somalia – Pirates' New Paradise," 13.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 From a legal perspective, only the Transitional Federal Government in Mogadishu as the internationally recognized government can issue licenses.
- 17 Office of the UN Resident & Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia Press Release, 1 September 2005.
- 18 Andrew Mwangura, "Somalia: Pirates or Protectors?"
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 This alludes to the Discovery Channel series *Deadliest Catch*, which provides a vivid illustration of the risks involved in high sea fishing.
- 22 Andrew Mwangura, "Somalia: Pirates or Protectors?"
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Najad Abdullahi, "'Toxic waste' behind Somali piracy," *Al Jazeera Africa*, 11 October 2008, accessed 3 January 2013, <http://www.english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/2008/10/2008109174223218644.html>.
- 26 See Chris Milton, "Somalia's toxic dumping ground," *The Ecologist*, 1 March 2009, accessed 3 January 2013, http://www.theecologist.org/News/news_analysis/268581/somalia_used_as_toxic_dumping_ground.html.
- 27 Chris Milton, "Somalia's toxic dumping ground."
- 28 Quoted both by Chris Milton and Najad Abdullahi.
- 29 Chris Milton, "Somalia's toxic dumping ground."
- 30 So Januna Ali Jama, quoted as a "spokesman for pirates" by Najad Abdullahi in his "'Toxic waste' behind Somali piracy"
- 31 Lehr and Lehmann, "Somalia – Pirates' New Paradise," 12.
- 32 Ibid., 14.
- 33 Ibid., 5.
- 34 Peter Lehr, "Somali Piracy: The Next Iteration," *Perspectives in Terrorism* 3:4 (2009): accessed 3 January 2013, <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/80>.
- 35 Lehr, "Somali Piracy: The Next Iteration."

- 36 The first incident in which more than US\$ 1 million was paid was the M/V *Danica White* hijack in summer 2007: US\$1.5 million were paid in that case.
- 37 On the other hand, the fact that French commandos later intercepted a group of pirates allegedly involved in the case later on land, killing some and arresting others, was hardly noticed.
- 38 This and the fact that pirates are operating far off their own shores with insufficient gear and provisions explains the fact that scores of Somali pirates perish at sea each year.
- 39 See for example Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*, May 2000, accessed 3 January 2013, http://www.papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=630727.
- 40 The then Australian foreign minister Anthony Downer for example thought it possible that the attack on the *Seabourn Spirit* was terrorist by intention; see Lehr and Lehmann, "Somalia – Pirates' New Paradise," 15.
- 41 Lehr, "Somali Piracy: The Next Iteration."
- 42 Oftentimes Thai, such as the FV *Ekawat Nava 5* (hijacked November 2008), FV *Thai Union 3* (hijacked October 2009), FV *Prantalay 11, 12 and 14* (all three in April 2010), or the FV *Sirichai Nava 11* (hijacked November 2010). Thailand belongs to the global "top ten" with regard to industrial trawling fleets.
- 43 See Jonathan Owen, "'Out of control' piracy set to cost world £9bn by 2015," *The Independent*, 17 April 2011, accessed 3 January 2013, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/out-of-control-piracy-set-to-cost-world-1639bn-by-2015-2269013.html>.
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- 45 "Piracy Could Force Sailor Boycott, Claim Indian Unions."
- 46 See for example the interesting article of Scott Marny, "Cutthroat Capitalism: The Pirates who prowl the Somali coast aren't just buccaneers – they are also businessmen," *Wired Magazine* 17:7 (2009), accessed 3 January 2013, http://www.wired.com/special_multimedia/2009/sp_cutthroatcapitalism.
- 47 The securitization theory was developed by Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde; see their book *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner 1997.
- 48 Bilyana Tsvetkova, "Securitizing Piracy Off the Coast of Somalia," *CEJISS* 3:1 (2009), accessed 3 January 2013, <http://www.cejiss.org/issue/2009-volume-3-issue-1/tsvetkova>.
- 49 Tsvetkova, Bilyana, "Securitizing Piracy Off the Coast of Somalia," 54.
- 50 Ibid., 49.
- 51 Maseh Zarif reports a cooperation between Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Al Shabaab; see Maseh Zarif, "Terror Partnership: AQAP and Shabaab," *AEI Critical Threats*, 2 July 2011, accessed 3 January 2013, <http://www.criticalthreats.org/somalia/maseh-zarif-terror-partnership-shabaab-aqap-july-2-2011>.
- 52 For example Sheikh Hassan Turki, leader of Hizbul Islam, as quoted in "Terror on the High Seas. Somali Pirates Form Unholy Alliance with Islamists," *Spiegel Online*, 20 April 2009, accessed 3 January 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,620027,00.html>.

- 53 Muqtar Ali Robow, also as quoted in "Terror on the High Seas."
- 54 Michael Ignatieff, *The Lesser Evil: Political Ethics in an Age of Terror* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2003), 122.
- 55 The author already expressed this view in Lehr, "Somali Piracy: The Next Iteration," and sees himself vindicated by the fact that demands of pirate action groups increasingly include the release of imprisoned colleagues in addition to ransom – which points at a rising awareness of their political power as influential actors in the Somali political kaleidoscope with the potential to also influence foreign governments' decisions and actions.
- 56 See for example James Kraska, "Fresh Thinking for an Old Problem. Report of the Naval War College Workshop on Countering Piracy." *Naval War College Review* 62:4 (2009), 141–54. Accessed 3 January 2013, <http://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/3713b4a5-4133-4be5-bb55-aa3bfa589413/Fresh-Thinking-for-an-Old-Problem-Report-of-the-N>.
- 57 Due to the current upheavals in the Middle East, these talks are "off again" at the moment.
- 58 Official name: Malacca Straits Coordinated Patrols (MALSINDO).
- 59 For a critical view on MALSINDO and the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Anti-Piracy ReCAAP, see Catherine Zara Raymond, "Piracy and Armed Robbery in the Malacca Strait – A Problem Solved?" *Naval War College Review* 62:3 (2009), 31–42. Accessed 3 January 2013, <http://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/7835607e-388c-4e70-baf1-b00e9fb443f1/Piracy-and-Armed-Robbery-in-the-Malacca-Strait-A.aspx>.
- 60 The original idea to establish an International Piracy Tribunal, for example in Hamburg, was ditched due to the exorbitant costs associated with this plan.
- 61 Jeffrey Kuhlmann, "Piracy: Understanding the Real Threat," *Counterterrorism. Journal of Counterterrorism & Homeland Security International* 15:4 (Winter 2009/2010), 36.
- 62 Lehr, "Somali Piracy: The Next Iteration."
- 63 "Arming sailors. Gun-free zones are dangerous at sea," *Washington Times*, 11 May 2009, accessed 3 January 2013, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/may/11/arming-sailors/>.
- 64 Confidential conversation with a private security consultant based in Dubai, June 2011.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 This is an IMO category, comparable to ReCAAP Category 2 (Moderately Significant).
- 67 Adam J. Young, *Contemporary Maritime Piracy in Southeast Asia. History, Causes and Remedies* (Singapore: ISEAS 2007), 57.

SECTION THREE

The new
multipolar politics
as a response
to transnational
disorder

6

Recrossing the Mogadishu line: US policy toward Somalia 1994–2012

Michael J. Boyle

Introduction

Since the overthrow of the dictator Mohammed Siad Barre in 1991, American policy toward Somalia has been marked by inconsistency and ambivalence. For the most part, successive US administrations have treated Somalia as an orphaned conflict of little or no intrinsic interest. Because Somalia lacked valuable exports and essential commodities like oil, the United States has routinely ignored the civil war in Somalia, treating it as an unfortunate by-product of a state destroyed by its own clan and regional rivalries. Its position on the periphery of a continent itself portrayed as peripheral to US interests meant that Somalia received negligible high-level attention and a tiny portion of annual US foreign aid.¹ Its humanitarian crisis—which killed 22,000 civilians, displaced approximately 1.1 million people, including 476,000 refugees in neighboring states between 2008 and 2011 alone—has elicited expressions of sympathy from most US administrations, but only rarely has it merited sustained political engagement.² As a rule, US policymakers have seen Somalia's civil war as a tragedy but not as a crisis that warrants serious levels of attention from the United States government.

Yet at least twice in the period following Barre's overthrow the United States has deviated from its policy of indifference to intervene in Somali

politics, in one case at great cost, to prevent an outcome seen as unfavorable to its interests. The first major US intervention in Somalia was in November 1992, where as part of Operation Restore Hope 25,000 American soldiers were sent to the country to avert a humanitarian disaster. Over the course of this intervention, the United States gradually shifted its mandate from a humanitarian relief mission to peace enforcement, as its leaders concluded that they would need to reign in the forces of local warlords to smooth the delivery of humanitarian aid. In practice, this effort to isolate and marginalize some warlords was a political intervention in Somalia's civil war which altered the balance of power between factions.³ The fateful decision to pursue the renegade warlord Mohammed Farah Aideed in 1993 led to the deaths of 19 US military personnel in the infamous Black Hawk Down incident.⁴ The televised images of US soldiers being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu by cheering mobs had a dramatic impact on US public opinion, leading many American policymakers to conclude that the costs of "fixing" Somalia were unacceptably high. The Clinton Administration ordered a withdrawal of US forces in Somalia on 25 March 1994 and abandoned the country to its fate once again.

For the rest of the decade, Somalia languished at the bottom of the list of US foreign policy priorities. But after the 11 September 2001 attacks on New York and Washington DC, the United States began to see Somalia in a different light. Concerned that ungoverned spaces might be havens for groups like Al-Qaeda, and that a growing Islamist movement might produce the Talibanization of the country, the United States concluded that Somalia was a potential threat which demanded a more aggressive policy response.⁵ For the Bush Administration, Somalia was dangerous not only because of the potential for radicalization within its own politics, but also because it might become an exporter of terrorism to the rest of the world. Of particular concern to US policymakers was the presence of foreign fighters in Somalia, as well as evidence that Somali immigrants had become involved in terrorist networks abroad.

In 2005–06, the rise of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) seemed to crystallize the threat of the Islamization of Somalia. In the eyes of US policymakers, the rise of the ICU was analogous to the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan, where a religious militia with an uncompromising vision of Islam restored order to a country wracked by war but did so at the cost of increasing fundamentalism and terror. The actual parallels between the ICU and the Taliban were inexact, but for many in Washington even an apparent similarity was enough to warrant concern. To ensure that the ICU did not become the effective government of Somalia, the Bush Administration backed an Ethiopian offensive against them in 2006, leading to the defeat and fragmentation of the ICU. In this second

intervention, the United States became involved in Somalia not because the country was intrinsically important, but because it was viewed as another front in the war on terror. Yet just as the effort to pursue Aideed backfired and led to an intensification of the war, the effect of this decision was disastrous: by overthrowing the only force which had been capable of restoring a semblance of order to the streets of Mogadishu, the United States returned the country to war and chaos. Because the United States wound up backing an occupation by Ethiopia, which was seen as anathema to most Somalis, an even more radical faction formerly allied to the ICU, Al Shabaab, profited from this intervention, expanding its area of control and becoming a cause célèbre for international jihadi groups. The strategic calculation made by the United States was that the continuation of Somalia's crisis was preferable to a scenario where a potentially anti-American collection of forces would turn the country into a breeding ground for Al-Qaeda, but in practice its intervention empowered an enemy more dangerous than the one it already faced.

The common theme that links these two interventions is the instrumentality of the US approach to Somalia. The United States has shown relatively little interest in the country, but twice over the last 20 years it has intervened in the service of its wider foreign policy concepts and priorities. In both cases, Somalia operated as a kind of test case on which US policymakers projected their visions of the world. For Operation Restore Hope, Somalia was seen as an example of President George Bush's "New World Order," in which UN-sponsored forces would act decisively in the post-Cold War world to prevent widespread human suffering. Similarly, President George W. Bush's decision to back the Ethiopian forces against the ICU in 2006 was portrayed as a test case of America's commitment to lead a worldwide struggle against terrorism. In neither case did Somalia—either its civil war or the humanitarian crisis flowing from it—matter on its own terms to the United States. Its policy of studied indifference to the civil war in Somalia was only broken when the United States saw some advantage in treating Somalia as an illustration for its wider foreign policy vision.

Why has the United States had such a sporadic and contradictory policy in Somalia over the last 20 years? This chapter will seek to explain the causes of its decision to once again wade into the complexities of Somalia's politics. First, it will review the history of US–Somali relations up to "Operation Restore Hope" in 1993. Second, it will trace the evolution of US policy in Somalia from 1994 to 2012, showing how three factors—the rise of Islamist groups such as ICU and Al Shabaab, the involvement of Somali-American diaspora members in Al-Qaeda and the emergence of international piracy—made the United States more willing to intervene directly in Somalia despite its pledge never to do so again. Third, it will examine how the Black Hawk Down incident affected

public opinion within the United States and produced a set of constraints which limited the leverage that the United States could bring to bear during its second intervention. Because the United States could not directly coerce local actors within Somalia, it wound up backing other proxy actors (such as the United Nations, the Ethiopian government, and later the African Union) to achieve its political objectives. The fourth section of this chapter will examine how these constraints also led the United States to undertake a series of covert counterterrorism operations against Islamist actors in Somalia, some of which have ensnared the United States in the same clan rivalries and disputes that produced the Black Hawk Down incident. Finally, this chapter will examine how these cross-cutting factors—the globalization of the effects of the Somalia crisis, the domestic constraints that US administrations face in dealing with Somalia, and the creeping militarization of the US counterterrorism efforts in Somalia—has produced a US policy which is detached from the realities of the conflict in Somalia. The result of this policy is that the United States has been marginalized during the formation of a new Somali government in 2012–13, while facing a greater risk of blowback from its decision to treat Somalia as another theater in its war on terror.

History of US–Somalia relations

From its independence in 1960 to the overthrow of the Barre regime in 1991, Somalia has been viewed by the United States through the lens of the Cold War. Originally a colony of Italy and Britain, Somalia became an independent state in June 1960.⁶ Its first leaders—President Aadan Abdullah Usmaan and Prime Minister Abdirashiid Ali Sharmarke—devoted themselves to establishing some elements of a modern state while simultaneously staking claims to greater Somaliland, including parts of Ogaden in Ethiopia. From the birth of the country to the present day, Somalia's leaders have been inclined to think regionally and to balance their responses to domestic enemies with their regional ambitions and enmities. In the immediate post-independence period, this approach manifested itself in support for the secessionist movements of Somalis in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. To achieve their regional objectives, Somalia's early leaders leaned toward the Soviet Union, if only because the Soviets were seen as backing anti-colonial struggles in the Third World. As a consequence, the United States had a somewhat frosty relationship with the first independent state of Somalia, though they did little to intervene in its affairs because it was such a marginal player in the Cold War world.

The coup d'état in 1969 that brought Major General Muhammad Siad Barre to power is significant for a number of reasons. Like the first generation of Somalia leaders, he hoped to claim "greater Somaliland," including territory from Ogaden. Yet Barre and much of the military elite in Somalia were furious with the previous civilian leadership for establishing diplomatic relationships with Ethiopia, whom they viewed as occupying land rightly belonging to Somalia. Barre justified his coup on the grounds of this betrayal of Somalia's interests by his predecessors and established his Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) to consolidate his power. In 1977, he initiated a war with Ethiopia over the Ogaden region in the hopes of creating a "greater Somaliland."⁷ The Soviet Union, allied with both Ethiopia and Somalia, had to choose sides in the conflict and decided to back Ethiopia. It sent military advisors, 15,000 Cuban troops, and large amounts of military equipment and weapons to Ethiopia.⁸ For the Barre regime, the war was a disaster. After some initial victories, Somali forces were routed and Ethiopia expelled the invading force. Barre had badly miscalculated and lost both the war and his superpower patron, which significantly weakened his grip on power. By 1978, the Somali army had retreated back to its own territory and Barre was in search of a new source of foreign sponsorship to bolster his rule at home.

The United States then stepped into the breach by offering substantial military and economic assistance for Somalia's loyalty in the Cold War. Members of the Somali army were trained in the United States, and a range of modest US-Somali trade agreements were put in place. The United States also provided Somalia approximately \$100 million a year in economic aid, as well as substantial levels of military equipment and weapons.⁹ The effect of the military aid was substantial, as foreign aid provided the glue that allowed the regime to function—often by providing side-payments to important clans and potential rivals—but it also provided the kind of largesse needed to proceed against the domestic opposition with impunity.¹⁰ The inadvertent consequence of US support was to allow the Barre regime to succumb to its worst impulses and become more totalitarian as its end drew near. The regular flow of US aid also encouraged high levels of corruption and cronyism that distorted the local economy.¹¹ The blinding effect of Cold War loyalties also meant that the United States was less willing to criticize the human rights of the Barre regime than it might otherwise have been for much of the 1970s and 1980s.

By the late 1980s, the escalation of violence in Somalia—through the emergence of opposition movements, clan warfare and regime repression—had made unfettered US support for Somalia less sustainable. A range of opposition movements, including the Ethiopia-backed Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) and the northern Somali National Movement (SNM), began to attack Barre's regime.¹² Internally, Barre's regime practiced a vicious

form of divide and rule, encouraging vendettas by rival clans as a way to keep rivals busy and off-balance. The effect was a decay of state's institutions and a growing sense of crisis. The Barre regime also conducted disappearances of young dissidents and massacred hundreds of religious protesters in 1989–90.¹³ A series of increasingly critical human rights reports by the State Department, and growing criticism from the US Congress, presaged the end of US support for Somalia. To some extent, this was a function of the end of the Cold War, as the decline of the Soviet Union made the costs of keeping unstable client states intact less tolerable for American policymakers. By 1988, the United States had decided that it would no longer support this increasingly totalitarian client, as government forces killed 40,000–50,000 of their own people in an increasingly desperate civil war.¹⁴ The United States ceased military aid to Somalia in 1988 and ended all economic aid in 1989, thus accelerating the regime's collapse.¹⁵ The result was an explosion of factional and clan violence which drew the country into an ever-worsening civil war.

The overthrow of Barre's regime in 1991 was hardly noticed by Washington, whose attention was focused on the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a new political order in Europe. The predominant view within the Bush Administration was that this crisis was an internal matter, to be resolved by Somali political leaders, and that it had no consequence for US political or economic interests.¹⁶ Yet the escalating clan violence and growing humanitarian disaster gradually began to draw some attention, particularly as the scale of the potential deaths from famine became apparent. In August 1992, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) estimated that 4.5 million Somalis were going hungry.¹⁷ At the time, some ICRC estimates also suggested that 70 percent of the population was in imminent danger of death by starvation.¹⁸ As the famine wore on, the death toll also soared. By some estimates, nearly 350,000 people died between the onset of the famine and the US intervention in 1993.¹⁹ The famine was not a wholly natural event, but in fact had been brought into being by the dislocation and destruction brought about by the insurgency against Barre. In this respect, the US bore some responsibility, because it had flooded Somalia with small weapons throughout the Cold War. By 1989, Somalia was the second most armed country in the Third World, behind only Iraq.²⁰ By some estimates, at least 100,000 weapons, many of which were American in origin, had fallen into the hands of adolescents in gun-mounted jeeps, called "technicals," who extorted money from relief agencies and killed civilians for sport.²¹

Despite the escalating humanitarian crisis, and the responsibility that the United States bore for it, there was relatively little momentum to intervene. In July 1992, the Joint Chiefs of Staff advised President George Bush that Somalia was a "bottomless pit" of clan warfare that the United States should

avoid at all costs.²² Yet a combination of factors began to slowly convince the United States that this was a crisis worth addressing. The most common factor attributed to this change of heart was the so-called “CNN effect,” in which the images of starving children on the nightly news caused public outrage which forced President Bush to act.²³ The evidence for the importance of media coverage in shaping public opinion is less clear than typically assumed in this case, but the media coverage of starvation in Somalia did motivate advocacy networks inside and outside the government to respond to the crisis.²⁴ Within the government, senior figures such as Andrew Natsios began holding regular media briefings to highlight the cost of the war.²⁵ As Jon Western has argued, the fact that US policy in the war in Bosnia had been so unsuccessful created pressure on President Bush to prove that his promise of a New World Order was more than just empty rhetoric.²⁶ External pressure on the Bush Administration from advocacy groups also began to have some effect. InterAction, a coalition of 160 US-based relief organizations, began to pressure the Bush Administration to do something about security in Somalia to allow for the delivery of humanitarian aid.²⁷ UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali also criticized the Bush Administration for paying attention to a “rich man’s war” in Bosnia while ignoring the plight of poor Africans in Somalia.²⁸ The final straw was the defeat of President Bush in the November 1992 elections, to a Democratic candidate—Governor Bill Clinton—who had repeatedly attacked Bush for failing to act in Bosnia and other crises around the globe. This defeat convinced the Bush Administration to intervene in Somalia for a humanitarian relief mission as a vindication of his foreign policy agenda. The assumption was that this mission would be widely supported in Washington, and that it could be done with only 25,000–30,000 troops and that the United States would be out of Somalia in no more than 6 months.

The arrival of the Clinton Administration in 1992 did little to change the humanitarian dimension of the Somalia mission, but it did change its tone and emphasis. A March 1993 UN resolution, written by US officials, gradually expanded the scope of the mission to include national reconciliation and some elements of “nation-building.”²⁹ This effort at nation-building was bound to produce political controversy because it would entail hard decisions about who was, and was not, inside the transitional Somali government. In other words, “nation-building” meant picking sides in the civil war, though this was not seen as such by most members of the Clinton administration. Moreover, the Clinton Administration was wedded to democracy promotion as a central element of their foreign policy, and US Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright insisted that Somalia would be turned into a democracy.³⁰ While formally professing neutrality, the United Nations also pressed the United States to go beyond simple humanitarian operations and disarm the militias.³¹ In effect, the Clinton

Administration's interpretation of the mission in Somalia slowly expanded to include a range of different goals—governance and reconciliation among them—seen as necessary preconditions for a successful humanitarian relief operation.

This view gradually led the United States to become more assertive against the Somali warlords who were preying on the civilian population and siphoning off the aid delivered for their own war efforts. This assertiveness was also driven by the brutality of the warlords themselves, some of whom were willing to challenge the United Nations in shocking ways. On 5 June 1993, 24 Pakistani peacekeepers were massacred by the forces of Mohammed Farah Aided in an attack designed to rattle the nerves of UN staff in the country. One week later, US forces used helicopter gunships to attack Aided's safe houses, which set off a series of violent confrontations between his forces and the United States in the streets of Mogadishu. Periodic fighting between United States forces and Aided, as well as some of his allies, continued throughout the summer. On 3 October 1993, a US snatch-and-grab operation against Aided conducted by US Task Force Ranger went badly wrong, with thousands of Somalis attacking and besieging US troops in a vicious firefight. The costs were substantial: 19 Americans were killed and 84 were wounded. One Malaysian soldier was also killed, while two Pakistani soldiers were seriously wounded. Hundreds if not thousands of Somalis were killed or wounded in the ensuing firefight.³² The US public was horrified by the images of the bodies of US service personnel being dragged through the streets by cheering Somali crowds.

Following the Black Hawk Down debacle, President Clinton's decision to pull US forces out of Somalia on 25 March 1994 appeared to put an end to American involvement in the war.³³ The conventional wisdom about the mission within the Clinton Administration was that the United States had erred by "crossing the Mogadishu line" in turning a supposedly neutral humanitarian mission into a peace enforcement mission.³⁴ The United States would not make the mistake of undertaking an intervention again for "the restoration of an entire country."³⁵ Within Washington, it was widely agreed that the sin of the US mission in Somalia was that it lost sight of its original, strictly limited mission, and as a result it had become ensnared in Somali politics and clan warfare which it neither understood nor had the capacity to influence. The Clinton Administration took a firm stand that it would have nothing more to do with Somalia, no matter how many died in its civil war. From 1994 to 2001, the United States strictly adhered to its policy of indifference in Somalia, offering only occasional statements of sympathy for those suffering and dispensing small amounts of aid to NGOs who continued to operate there.

US policy toward Somalia 2001–12

The events of 11 September 2001 transformed the American perspective on Somalia and turned it from a neglected crisis to an urgent one. Among the most important conclusions drawn by the Bush Administration at this point was that ungoverned spaces, such as failed states, were breeding grounds for terrorist organizations. The example of Afghanistan—where the Taliban governed only part of the country, and wound up playing host to Al-Qaeda—was central to the Bush Administration's thinking at the time. In that case, the inability of the Taliban to govern their country—as well as their apparent ideological sympathy to groups like Al-Qaeda—had provided an opportunity for Al-Qaeda to take root and build training camps, which had in turn produced well-trained and experienced operatives capable of carrying out attacks on Western targets. For the Bush Administration, the formula was clear: ungoverned spaces, particularly in the Muslim world, were dangerous because they would increase the quantity and quality of terror that the United States and its allies would face.

From this vantage point, Somalia was now a pressing problem. It had been without an effective government since 1991, and the 12 attempts made between 1991 and 1999 to establish a functioning national unity government had ended in failure.³⁶ The Arta negotiations in 2000 led to the creation of the UN-sponsored TNG, but it had never controlled more than a small portion of Somali territory.³⁷ In this respect, Somalia was the quintessential ungoverned territory. Moreover, Somalia had been wracked by years of civil war, which had produced a generation of battle-hardened young men who had at least some military training. The experience of the Somali population with US forces during the UNITAF's ill-fated operations had not favorably disposed much of the Somali population to the United States; there were undoubtedly dozens of powerful, highly armed warlords who would be happy to cooperate with Al-Qaeda if it harmed US interests. The growing prominence of Islamist politics in Somalia, and the appearance of Al-Qaeda-linked cells in Somalia, also worried US policymakers, who were concerned that endemic instability would provide a tremendous opportunity for terrorist groups to flourish. For these reasons, the Bush Administration concluded that Somalia posed the greatest risk of being a haven for terrorist groups of any country in Africa.

From 2001 onward, Washington began to show increasing levels of attention to Somalia, though it lacked clear direction on what exactly to do to affect the situation there. Its first steps were predominantly defensive. President Bush immediately designated the Islamist group Al-Ittihad Al Islami (Islamic Union) on the list of proscribed terrorism-related entities as senior

Administration officials began highlight its alleged links with Al-Qaeda.³⁸ By 2002, the United States had increased military reconnaissance flights and other surveillance activities over Somalia, though much of this remained out of the public eye.³⁹ Among the most consequential United States moves at this time for the Somali population was its decision to freeze the assets of Al-Barkaat, Somalia's largest money transfer agency. This had a substantial impact on Somalia's already war-ravaged economy, as this Presidential Order interrupted the flow of remittances from abroad, a source of revenue that sustains many Somali families. By some estimates, this ban would keep between \$400 million and \$1 billion out of the Somalia economy.⁴⁰ In 2002, the United States also created the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) in Djibouti to boost its force projection capabilities, and later developed the East African Counterterrorism Initiative (EACTI), which devotes resources to improving policing, judicial, and intelligence capacity for a range of countries in the region.⁴¹ President Bush pledged over \$100 million for the EACTI, and US support was instrumental in establishing intelligence services for the semi-autonomous territories of Puntland and Somaliland.⁴²

Unlike other similar states at risk of terrorism, such as Pakistan and Yemen, there was no government in Somalia that the United States could bargain with. To remedy this situation, the United States threw its efforts behind the UN-backed processes of national reconciliation in the hopes that this would create a government. Three separate Somalia national peace conferences were held between 2000 and 2002 but all produced rather meager results.⁴³ In 2004, the United States threw its support behind a UN-sponsored effort to set up a new TFG. This government was established in 2004, but it was crippled by incompetence, corruption and clan infighting. As a government in exile, it controlled no more than one city near the Ethiopian border. The TFG had no budget, civil service, or effective bureaucracy, although the international community recognized it as a sovereign state.⁴⁴ The parliament of the TFG included some 550 members and even getting a quorum for a vote took substantial lobbying on the part of the United Nations.⁴⁵ Most of the TFG officials lived a relatively well-heeled life in exile and had little support within Somalia itself. Its militia, supported by the United States, was regularly accused of human rights abuses and a lack of transparency. In 2008–09, approximately 40 percent of its police force left their jobs because their salaries were left unpaid by the TFG.⁴⁶ The delivery of US military aid to TFG military forces was highly ineffective, as many senior TFG commanders had connections to Islamist groups and local warlords and passed along US weapons to them.⁴⁷ Despite United States pressure to be inclusive, the TFG was dominated by the Darod clan from the north and reflected the priorities and prejudices of that clan and its allies. As a result, the TFG was actively opposed by the powerful

Hawiye clan, who dominated much of Mogadishu.⁴⁸ The Hawiye clan struck an alliance with a number of prominent business leaders and sharia courts in Mogadishu, which eventually evolved into the ICU.⁴⁹ Despite these problems, US policy remained blandly supportive of the TFG, as senior Bush and Obama administration officials proclaimed regularly that any future government for Somalia must begin there.⁵⁰

The rise of ICU and Al Shabaab

From the US vantage point, three developments after 2004 began to suggest that the current stalemate in Somalia was not tenable. The first was the growing prominence of Islamist actors, such as the ICU, but of particular concern was the emergence of Al Shabaab (literally “the Youth”), a collection of young Islamist fighters who began to assassinate members of the TFG.⁵¹ While Al Shabaab was a descendent of Al-Ittihad and often functioned as the military wing of the ICU, it was at least nominally committed to a global jihad and looked to have influence beyond Somalia itself.⁵² Its links with Al-Qaeda, though often unconfirmed and circumstantial, were of particular concern to US policymakers, who feared that Al Shabaab might facilitate the entry of Al-Qaeda operatives into Somalia. Yet Al Shabaab was only one Islamist player among many. By 2005, it was still a marginal organization, allied to the ICU but without a substantial basis for support on its own. Its insistence on a strict interpretation of sharia law and its embrace of takfiri ideology tended to limit its natural popularity with the Somali public, who were accustomed to more diverse practices of Islam than Al Shabaab would permit.

Some scholars have argued that, if left on its own, both the ICU and Al Shabaab would have imploded by stagnating or by running afoul of traditional clan politics within Somalia.⁵³ There was growing evidence that Al Shabaab was alienating part of the Somali population by its insistence on strict sharia law. Yet the United States saw Al Shabaab as a Somali version of its struggle against “radical Islam,” rather than just a brutal but ultimately marginal Somali Islamist force. By late 2005, the United States decided that it could not leave the situation alone. With substantial US backing, a new alliance of progovernment business leaders and criminals formed a new group—the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counterterrorism (ARPCT)—which was determined to counter the ICU.⁵⁴ This group, which accepted US financial support in trade for handing over key Al-Qaeda members, infuriated many Somalis, who began to flock to the ICU in greater numbers. The result was open warfare on the streets of Mogadishu, and by mid-2006 the ICU controlled large parts of Mogadishu and the southern parts of Somalia. The ICU was

remarkably effective in restoring public order after years of conflict, raising the prospect that like the Taliban they would wind up as the *de facto* government by offering order to a war-weary population.⁵⁵ Yet unlike the Taliban, the ICU was a broad coalition, including Sufis and moderate Islamists, that demonstrated less ideological rigidity than Al-Qaeda or the Taliban.⁵⁶

The initial response of the United States was to try to work with ICU, proposing that the TFG enter into a power-sharing arrangement with their rivals.⁵⁷ But the fateful decisions to back the TFG and the ARPCT had discredited the United States in the eyes of the ICU, thus undercutting whatever leverage that the United States might have had with the ICU. By this point, there was also evidence that the ICU had begun to radicalize, partially out of its own internal power struggles, but partially due to its hostility toward the United States for backing the ARPCT.⁵⁸ The ICU began to speak of seeking a greater Islamic state in East Africa, which seemed to mirror the grand ambitions that Al-Qaeda had with the global Caliphate.⁵⁹ Once the ICU had captured much of the country, hundreds of foreign fighters from Afghanistan, Chechnya, Iraq and Yemen flooded into Somalia and over 16 training camps were established.⁶⁰ In a July 2006 audiotape, it received the endorsement of Osama bin Laden, who pledged the support for the ICU if an international force was sent to destroy them.⁶¹

The US-backed TFG was effectively surrounded in its base in Baidoa and had a limited ability to influence events in Somalia. In late 2006, the United States also began to see evidence that the ICU was going to move on the TFG and expel it from the country. In the eyes of the United States, Somalia was moving along the path that Afghanistan did during the 1990s, and without decisive intervention its preferred candidate for the government of Somalia would collapse. The ICU was also increasingly unresponsive to United States demands to hand over Al-Qaeda suspects resident in Somalia, and the US policy toward them hardened. By December 2006, Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Jendayi Frazer had characterized the leadership of the ICU as "extremists to [the] core."⁶²

In late December 2006, the United States threw its support behind an Ethiopian invasion of Somalia to overthrow the ICU. Ethiopia was concerned about another irredentist war by the ICU in its Ogaden region and wanted to make sure that the ICU could no longer hold on to the seat of government in Mogadishu. While the United States officially took no position on the invasion, its public statements offered carefully worded support for the attack, often subtly justifying it on the grounds that it was in response to aggression by the ICU.⁶³ The United States deployed air and ground assets in support of the Ethiopian operation, including helicopter gunships and tons of armaments.⁶⁴ The United States took advantage of this crisis to send advisors to Somalia,

including special operations units such as Task Force 88.⁶⁵ One of its key objectives was to seek to capture or kill high-value counterterrorism targets while the Ethiopian forces kept ICU and its allies in Al Shabaab off balance.⁶⁶ The United States also engaged in at least two aerial attacks on convoys of retreating Al Shabaab militia, which had the effect of “tether[ing] the US directly to the Ethiopian offensive in the eyes of Somalis.”⁶⁷ Though it did not admit it to its own public, the United States was a combatant in this war, cooperating with Kenyan, Ethiopian, and British security forces to pursue the remnants of the ICU toward the Kenyan border, supported by a US Navy blockade.⁶⁸

US officials moved quickly after the Ethiopian victory to claim that this represented a historic opportunity for the people of Somalia. Yet the effect of this operation was the opposite of what the United States had intended. The Ethiopian forces routed the ICU, who fled to the southern border or to neighboring countries and did not defend Mogadishu with guerrilla tactics, as had been feared.⁶⁹ To the surprise of virtually everyone, the ICU fell apart under pressure and disintegrated as a fighting force. But the war had the effect of splintering the relationship between the ICU and Al Shabaab, as Al Shabaab transformed itself into the symbol of resistance against the Ethiopian invasion. The leaders of Al Shabaab turned on the ICU for its betrayal of the cause of Islam and directed its venom especially to those leaders of the ICU who attempted to come to an agreement with the TFG. An unknown number of Somalis joined the Al Shabaab’s insurgency against the Ethiopian forces, even though some did not fully understand its ideology.⁷⁰ In effect, the US-backed invasion created an opportunity for Al Shabaab to prove its mettle, and the insurgency against Ethiopia became an engine of recruitment and radicalization for the organization. Another unintended effect was that the Al Shabaab became a cause célèbre for the international jihadi movement, drawing plaudits and offers of support from bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and others.⁷¹ The plight of Al Shabaab so effectively employed the conspiracy narrative of Al-Qaeda—that it was a defender of Muslims against a Christian invading force backed by the United States—that it began to draw substantial support from fighters across the international jihadi diaspora, including some Americans. By February 2008, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had declared Al Shabaab a “Foreign Terrorist Organization.”⁷² As a declared enemy of the United States, Al Shabaab grew closer to Al-Qaeda, leading to several public pledges of loyalty from leading Al Shabaab members to Osama bin Laden.⁷³

By mid-2008, the position of the United States was increasingly untenable. The insurgency waged by Al Shabaab in Mogadishu was increasingly vicious, with over 1,000 casualties in the first few months fighting and 200,000–300,000

displaced.⁷⁴ Al Shabaab drew on the examples of insurgents in Afghanistan and Iraq and began to employ tactics—such as roadside bombs, remote-controlled landmines, and suicide attacks—not typically employed in the years of endemic conflict within Somalia.⁷⁵ As Ken Menkhaus has argued, the war began to closely resemble a “complex insurgency,” as a mix of experienced Al Shabaab fighters, local Somali volunteers, Al-Qaeda operatives, and Somali clans and militias opposed to the TFG all joined the fight.⁷⁶ The response by Ethiopia and the TFG militias was also brutal, with indiscriminate shelling of civilian structures being fairly common. The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) conducted a terrorist attack against a Chinese-run oil exploration site, killing 74 people and raising the prospect that the war might spread beyond Somalia.⁷⁷

Aware that this situation was not tenable, the United States began to push for new negotiations between the TFG and the ICU, and backed plans for an African Union-led peacekeeping force, African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to take over security from Ethiopian forces. As part of this Djibouti agreement in August 2008, a timetable for withdrawal of Ethiopian forces was agreed and the legal authorization of the AMISOM peacekeeping mission was established.⁷⁸ In the eyes of the United States, this transfer of authority to AMISOM would remove Ethiopia from the Somalia equation and take away the momentum of an increasingly vicious insurgency. In the eyes of Al Shabaab, this transfer of authority to a UN-sponsored peacekeeping force was little more than window dressing because it did not change the fact that foreign forces, backed by the United States, United Nations, and other distrusted regional players, were occupying parts of Somalia. Moreover, the fact that AMISOM was largely composed of military forces from Christian African countries appeared to confirm the conspiracy theory of Al Shabaab that the United States and its allies in the TFG were secretly perpetuating a plan for Christian peacekeepers to occupy and destroy a Muslim land in Somalia. As Ethiopian forces withdrew from the country to make way for AMISOM, Al Shabaab seized the advantage, occupying parts of the southern territories and sections of Mogadishu outside the control of the TFG. Their rapid success was partially a function of AMISOM’s slow start. Despite a pledge of 8,000 AMISOM peacekeepers, only 5,000 had arrived by 2009, sent mainly from Uganda and Burundi. It would take AMISOM over 2 years of fierce fighting before its forces expelled Al Shabaab from Mogadishu in August 2011. Though it aimed to remove the threat of an Islamist government in Somalia, the consequence of the US-backed Ethiopian invasion was to entrench Al Shabaab within the global jihadist movement and to empower it to take the lead in the insurgency against Ethiopia and later AMISOM forces.

Somali involvement in Al-Qaeda

The second major development which convinced the United States to be drawn into Somali affairs after years of neglect was the appearance of Somali diaspora members in Al-Qaeda and other related terrorist groups. To some extent, this was not surprising, as Al-Qaeda drew in converts from the disaffected across the globe. But the growing prominence of Somalis in Al-Qaeda was a direct consequence of the insurgency in Somalia in a number of ways. One of the most noticeable effects of the war in Somalia was the emergence of a vast and scattered diaspora, as thousands of refugees from the conflict relocated to the United States, Canada, and Europe. By 2004–05, it was increasingly clear that the children of this diaspora were particularly susceptible to calls from Al-Qaeda and local Islamist groups to return to Somalia and take up arms against Somalia's enemies. The rise of Al Shabaab following the Ethiopian invasion in 2006 played into this narrative particularly well, as these diaspora youth were called to return home and defend Somalia against a "Christian" army backed by the United States. By 2009, the FBI had reported that over 20 young Somali-Americans had disappeared from their homes in Minneapolis-St Paul, presumably recruited for the purpose of jihadi activities in Somalia.⁷⁹ Several of the missing Somali-American youth from other cities were also reported to have found their way to Al Shabaab.⁸⁰ In June 2010, two Americans were arrested in New Jersey as they were heading to join Al Shabaab.⁸¹ There were further reports of disappearing young Somali men from Canada, Europe, and Australia.⁸² The Somali diaspora community was particularly at risk in the United Kingdom. One report suggested that "dozens of Islamic extremists have returned to Britain from terror training camps in Somalia."⁸³ Shirwa Ahmen, a naturalized US citizen from Somalia, became the first American suicide bomber in an attack in October 2008 which killed "dozens" of Al Shabaab's opponents.⁸⁴

There is also circumstantial evidence that Somali recruits to Al Shabaab and Al-Qaeda have been asked to find ways to attack their former home countries. These recruits are quite useful, as their American, Canadian, and European passports allow easier travel back to Western countries to launch attacks.⁸⁵ However, the predominant trend was that young Somalis were leaving Western countries to join the war in Somalia more than they are joining Al-Qaeda's fight against the United States.⁸⁶ The UK authorities discovered that at least one Somali citizen studying in the United Kingdom aimed to return to Somalia and become a suicide bomber, and feared that there might be more with similar ambitions.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the United States has been concerned

that the training that these diaspora members received as part of Al Shabaab could be put to use in terrorist attacks on Western cities.

Piracy in the Horn of Africa

The final development—also in part a consequence of the increasing lawlessness of Somalia and its insurgency—was the reemergence of piracy off the coast of Somalia. While there had always been sporadic pirate attacks around the Horn of Africa, the problem escalated substantially following the Ethiopian invasion and the renewal of guerrilla warfare in Somalia. In 2008, 111 ships were attacked and 47 were hijacked off the Somali coast.⁸⁸ By 2009, the problem had become even worse. There were 47 successful hijackings in 2009, and over 120 vessels were fired upon.⁸⁹ In 2009, Somali pirates seized 867 hostages, and held 263 crewmembers for what amounted to millions of dollars in ransoms.⁹⁰ By 2009, the pirates were operating nearly 1,000 miles out into the Indian Ocean, posing a much more serious threat to global shipping. The number of attacks declined slightly in 2010, with 32 attacks (though only seven successful ones) by Somali pirates.⁹¹ Although there was an increase in arrests of Somali pirates in 2009–11, piracy has remained a serious problem in the Horn of Africa, as pirates have extracted approximately \$120 million in ransom payments from a number of countries.⁹² The escalating costs of piracy in the Indian Ocean—both direct costs, needed to pay ransoms, but also indirect costs needed to insure and reroute vessels—also made the problem of note for the United States, whose economy relies in no small way on global shipping.

The rise of piracy is more than just a nuisance to the United States because of how it interacts with its strategy in Somalia, particularly its aspirations to build a strong central government. Since 2004, the United States had backed the TFG as the government-in-waiting in Somalia, and regularly argued that the establishment of a strong central state is necessary for Somalia's crisis to end. Yet the effects of the burgeoning market in international piracy made achieving this goal even more difficult. Accompanying the piracy is criminality, particularly as rival gangs and clans attempt to capture key ports and businesses necessary for the pirate operations. These ports are protected by a range of corrupt officials, including local police, who accept payment for turning a blind eye to the operations.⁹³ The profits from piracy are often delivered in cash, where it is distributed among the various players needed to make the operation successful.⁹⁴ The effect of piracy is to allow the existing criminal networks in Somalia grow in strength and number, and to contribute

to the corruption of government and local officials, thus increasing the already formidable obstacles that the United States faces in building a strong central government in Somalia.

By 2009, it was clear that the United States had a compelling interest in countering the piracy off the coast of Somalia. The hijacking of the *Maersk Alabama* on 8 April 2009, was the first time a US-flagged ship with a US crew was captured by Somali pirates.⁹⁶ In response, the US sharpshooters from the USS *Bainbridge* assisted the crew in recapturing the vessel from the hijackers. This event convinced senior US officials that it would need to treat the spillover effects of the crisis in Somalia more seriously. By 2011, US navy ships had begun aggressive interdiction efforts off the coast in an attempt to stop the spread of piracy, and US officials also created a diplomatic Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia to coordinate the antipiracy efforts of a number of states.⁹⁶ The United States has been drawn, with some reluctance, into antipiracy efforts to control the spillover from Somalia's chronic instability and war. Together with its growing concern over Al Shabaab, and the potential blowback effects of Somali diaspora returning to attack Western cities, the United States now had a set of interests which demanded a level of engagement in Somalia that would have been unthinkable in the late 1990s.

Limited US leverage

While the United States developed a growing interest in the outcome of the crisis in Somalia, it has limited leverage in the country for two reasons. The first is casualty sensitivity. First, the *Black Hawk Down* incident led the Clinton Administration to conclude that the American public would not tolerate substantial levels of casualties for an intervention in Somalia. The images of wounded and dead Americans being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu had a catalytic effect on public opinion, turning Americans sharply against what was supposed to be a costless humanitarian operation. According to data collected by Richard C. Eichenberg, support for the United States use of force in Somalia plummeted from 72 percent before hostilities began to 41 percent afterwards.⁹⁷ Data collected by James Burk suggests that the support for the US mission dropped 10 percent following the *Black Hawk Down* incident, though whether this was driven by the casualties, or a more general sense that the United States was exceeding its limited humanitarian mission, is unclear.⁹⁸

Existing research on American public opinion makes clear why United States options in Somalia were so limited after this incident. The American

public varies in its casualty sensitivity based on a number of factors, including the type of mission, its perceived legitimacy, the extent to which the mission is designed to reorder the domestic affairs of that state, and the multilateral support for the mission. By some estimates, the American public shows a reluctance to support missions as casualties accumulate, which constrains American policymakers to only contemplate short and presumably easy interventions.⁹⁹ In this respect, US policymakers could only back operations in Somalia which would be rapid and near-costless, and an extended intervention or peacekeeping force was out of the question. The casualty threshold for US action in Somalia is very low, as public support for Operation Restore Hope plummeted after the deaths of 43 Americans.¹⁰⁰ Any large-scale US military operation in Somalia would almost certainly exceed that casualty threshold, particularly if it faced determined resistance from Al Shabaab.

Of particular importance to this case is that the American public is deeply opposed to interventions in civil wars.¹⁰¹ Given the endemic conflict in Somalia, any proposal for direct and public US involvement would be tantamount to renewing American involvement in Somalia's civil war. For this reason, US policymakers are loathe to be seen taking a direct role in its conflict or even motivating internal political change in the country. According to data collected by Eichenberg, in 1992–93, public support for the mission in Somalia was consistently lower when framed as internal political change (48 percent) rather than a humanitarian mission (63 percent).¹⁰² To threaten the use of force in Somalia in a sustained way—either directly or through a UN-backed peacekeeping mission—US policymakers would be effectively intervening in a civil war to produce domestic policy change within Somalia, two objectives which would be deeply unpopular with the American public. During the 1992–93 mission, support for operations beyond simple humanitarian relief—such as disarming Somali gunmen (10 percent) and using overwhelming force to defeat Somali factions (19 percent)—was very low.¹⁰³ This constraint explains why the United States has recently encouraged other actors—such as the United Nations, Ethiopia, or the African Union—to be the face of diplomatic efforts to bring an end to Somalia's civil war.

Finally, the American public tends to have higher casualty tolerance for conflicts that the United States seems to be winning.¹⁰⁴ The experience of US forces in Somalia in 1992–93 is relevant here. The mission was widely perceived to be a disaster that led to the loss of American lives for no real net gain to US security. Within American political discourse, the case of Somalia in 1992–93 is used as a textbook example of what the United States should not do because a mission with humanitarian motives was clouded by “mission creep” at the cost of American lives. In contrast to Iraq, where a second conflict was deemed acceptable because the first Gulf War was

perceived by Americans as a resounding success, the prospect of a second intervention in Somalia would be deeply unpopular because it would be seen as replicating failure. For these reasons, US policymakers know that their options for direct military intervention in Somalia are constrained. The United States can threaten and cajole, push for negotiations or withdraw aid, but the prospect of the sustained use of coercion is off the table due to domestic political constraints.

The second and related factor which limits American leverage in Somalia is the image that Somalis, particularly within Al Shabaab and related Islamist groups, have of the United States. Especially in the last 20 years, the United States has been portrayed by its opponents as a country which will not tolerate high levels of casualties in military operations without a compelling rationale.¹⁰⁵ For example, one of the recurring arguments made by Al-Qaeda is that the Black Hawk Down incident proves that the United States is a paper tiger that cannot sustain casualties, especially in asymmetrical wars against insurgent or terrorist groups. In fact, Al-Qaeda claims credits for the Black Hawk Down incident, claiming that they dispatched trainers to the Islamic Union before the 1993 battle.¹⁰⁶ Their importance in this incident may be overstated, but the reality is less important than the fact they have claimed credit for the victory.¹⁰⁷ Within Al-Qaeda's ideological narrative, the Black Hawk incident in Somalia is an important example when the United States was forced into a humiliating withdrawal after a substantial loss of life by a (partially) Islamist force. There is some evidence that Al Shabaab has internalized this example in important ways, citing the failure of Operation Restore Hope when threatening to turn Somalia into a theater of war for the Americans.¹⁰⁸ While no systematic data on public opinion in Somalia is available, it is plausible that other Somali factions and clans have accepted this narrative that the United States can be defeated if they manage to inflict casualties on it.¹⁰⁹ Because of this widespread perception of the United States as a weak and casualty sensitive actor, local factions and clans in Somalia may be less susceptible to pressure or coercion from the United States than expected. These factions know that the United States cannot sell to its public or the Congress a sustained and costly military intervention into Somali politics, which means that they can afford to defy US demands with little real consequence.

These two factors—the actual casualty sensitivity of the American public, and the perception within Somalia that the United States is weak and sensitive to costs—combine to limit the leverage that the United States has over actors in Somalia. According to Alexander L. George, among the key criteria for coercion is the ability to impose escalating costs on opponents and to create a sense of urgency which forces them to act.¹¹⁰ In Somalia, the United States can do neither. With the prospect of a direct and sustained military

action off the table due to the potential domestic opposition, local actors in Somalia know that they can effectively ignore the United States at little cost. This perception of the United States in part explains why both the TFG and Al Shabaab have been so blasé about refusing US demands to apprehend key Al-Qaeda suspects in Somalia. They may lack the capacity (TFG) or the will (Al Shabaab), but in both cases they know that there is little risk in saying no to America.

Moreover, the United States does not have many incentives to offer factions within Somalia to win their support for US-backed political change. While the United States does contribute funds to the AMISOM peacekeeping forces, it has offered relatively little financial support for the Transitional Government or for governance and democratic development more generally.¹¹¹ If anything, the United States has been substantially cutting aid to Somalia, dropping its appropriation from \$411.19 million in FY 2009 to \$84.96 million in FY 2011.¹¹² It completely eliminated food aid to Somalia in FY2010, from \$123 million in FY2009.¹¹³ None of the key players—including the Transitional Federal Government (TFG)—were substantially dependent on US support. As a result, the United States has relatively few carrots that it can offer when addressing the Somalia crisis; it is a worried and interested player, but not one that Somali factions must take seriously in the hopes of future reward or for fear of punishment. To compensate, the United States has increasingly relied on proxy actors—the Ethiopian government, the United Nations or the African Union—to take direct action in Somalia, while trying to quietly influence decisions behind the scenes. Its inability to credibly threaten military intervention or offer political or economic concessions to the parties explains why the United States was largely sidelined during the formation of a new government in 2012. As a result of its casualty sensitivity and the effect that this factor has on the political calculations of other actors, the United States punches beneath its weight in Somalia, and often finds that it must resort to other, more covert, strategies to achieve results.

Fighting dirty

Given these constraints, the strategy that the United States increasingly has relied upon in Somalia is subversion and proxy warfare against high-value counterterrorism targets. Among the central concerns of the United States is that high-ranking Al-Qaeda members are living in Somalia and operating training camps for terrorist operatives. Of particular concern was the presence in Somalia of the perpetrators of the 1998 US embassy attacks in Kenya and Tanzania, as well as the operatives behind the 2002 attack in Mombasa,

Kenya.¹¹⁴ To address this threat, while officially remaining outside the Somali civil war, the United States has enlisted the help of various local factions to hunt down and capture Al-Qaeda members. The first of these was the ARPCT but a smaller faction of ex-TFG members, called the Anti-Terrorist Alliance (ATA), was also operative.¹¹⁵ Ironically, the ARPCT organization was comprised of warlords who had fought against the United States in 1993, including during the Black Hawk Down incident.¹¹⁶ Both organizations were widely criticized in Somalia, for pursuing vendettas, engaging in kidnapping, and turning over people unrelated to terrorism to the United States for questioning. According to Mohammed Ibrahim, "US support for ARPCT thugs and its blunt tactics alienated countless, if not most, Somalis."¹¹⁷ Yet Assistant Secretary of State Jendayi Frazer was unapologetic, pledging the United States to work "with those elements that will help us root out Al-Qaeda and to prevent Somalia from becoming a safe haven for terrorists, and we are doing it in the interest of protecting America."¹¹⁸ The excesses of the ARPCT have already backfired on the United States, contributing indirectly to the rise of the ICU and later Al Shabaab in 2006, and may continue to do so in the future.

A key dimension of the US counterterrorism efforts in Somalia was the development of networks of informers throughout Somalia, but especially in the northern regions, in the hopes of capturing and killing high-value targets. Using these networks, the United States has hunted Al-Qaeda members in Somalia and members of other Islamist networks who have assassinated Westerners working in the region.¹¹⁹ But critics have noted that just as it did during the 1992–93 operation the United States is picking sides in the conflict, empowering one faction at the expense of another with uncertain results.¹²⁰ In the short term, the effect of US activities has been an acceleration of violence, as Islamist groups, militias, and clans opposed to US presence have conducted reprisals against those collaborating with the United States in counterterrorism operations. According to the International Crisis Group, at least 10 killings between 2001 and 2005 were attributed to jihadis delivering payback to US-backed factions, though "in Mogadishu's anarchic and rubble-strewn streets, it is not always clear who is hunting whom."¹²¹ There has also been an increase in abductions of Arabs in Somalia, as the rewards offered by the United States for the delivery of terrorist suspects created a market for anyone who might be passed off, however inaccurately, as a terrorist.¹²² Moreover, factions within Somalia have rushed to denounce their enemies as terrorists and supporters of terrorists, in the hopes that this will earn them the financial backing of the United States. Even members of the TFG have accused one another of being terrorists, in the hopes of discrediting their rivals and forcing them out of government. The development of these networks in the service of a dirty war against counterterrorism targets has once again

ensnared the United States in Somali politics and produced alliances with unreliable partners who may turn on the United States at a later point.

The United States has not limited its operations to subversion and has also been willing to periodically engage in air strikes, drone attacks, and Special Forces raids. In May 2005, residents of coastal villages in Somaliland found a small number of American troops in their midst, conducting search and capture operations against highly valued militants.¹²³ In early January 2007, the United States attacked several locations in southern Somalia to kill terror suspects from the 1998 US Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. This attack was unsuccessful but the United States has continued to use air strikes against terrorist operatives, even at the cost of civilian casualties. More strikes followed in 2008, some of which killed senior Al Shabaab leaders.¹²⁴ A 2009 aerial bombardment of fighting villages in southern Somalia cost at least 70 lives, including some civilians.¹²⁵ The United States has also resorted to drone strikes against senior Al Shabaab leaders, and by 2012 it conducted so many drone surveillance flights over the country that its drone program posed a serious risk to civilian aircraft.¹²⁶ These drone strikes are conducted without public acknowledgment, in order to allow for plausible deniability and to avoid any domestic political costs that deeper involvement in Somalia might bring. Due to its constraints, the United States has chosen to conduct a covert dirty war in Somalia, buying off factions, and hunting its enemies, with uncertain consequences for Somalia's long-term political future.

Conclusion

Following the disaster of the Black Hawk Down incident, the United States disavowed any interest in Somali politics, and promised itself that it would never again become ensnared in the clan rivalries and factional disputes that were tearing the country apart. But the emergence of the "war on terror" in 2001 led the United States to gradually break this promise, as it has acted to shift Somalia's internal politics away from factions who might see some advantage in allying with Al-Qaeda, while secretly hunting terrorist operatives present in the country. To some extent, the return of US involvement in Somalia can be attributed to the globalization of its conflict. During the period from 1994 to 2001, the United States presumed that containment of Somalia's chaos was difficult, but possible. But after 11 September 2001, the United States began to realize that the effects of the crisis there—such as Somali involvement in terrorist networks and the return of piracy to the Horn of Africa—were increasingly becoming global, and that United States personnel and interests

could no longer be shielded from its consequences. The United States decided to recross the Mogadishu line to protect itself from harm emanating from the crisis in Somalia, and to confront forces there—such as Al Shabaab and other Islamist factions—whom it saw as new enemies in its global war on terror. During this period, as in 1992–94, the United States came to Somalia not out of any intrinsic interest in Somalia, but because Somalia seemed emblematic of the kind of threats identified as important in its vision of the world.

Owing to this relatively instrumental view of the conflict and to the constraints imposed by American public opinion, US policy toward Somalia has been marked by short-term thinking and an underestimation of the blowback potential of its actions. The period from 2005 to 2012 has been the first sustained political intervention that the United States has made in Somalia since the Black Hawk Down incident in 1993. Because it lacks the ability to credibly threaten direct military engagement, this has been a very different kind of US intervention, conducted mostly through proxy actors and without the significant “footprint” of a large US military presence in country. Unlike 1992–93, it has also ceded diplomatic ground to a range of other actors, such as the United Nations, EU, and regional African partners, some of whom may have more leverage over the local actors than the United States does. Nevertheless, there are clear parallels between both US interventions. In both cases, the United States has picked sides in Somalia’s internal conflict and found itself standing amidst fierce political and clan animosities that it scarcely understood. In both cases, the United States did not see the thread connecting its own behavior with the blowback it later experienced. The fact that the Black Hawk Down incident was preceded by a US air strike that killed 73 civilians at a meeting of clan elders in July 1993 is often lost on Americans who remember only the cheering crowds surrounding the corpses of their soldiers.¹²⁷ It remains to be seen if its backing of an Ethiopian invasion or its dirty war against terrorist suspects will produce similar blowback effects, but the rise of Al Shabaab after Ethiopia’s invasion and the extent to which the United States was sidelined in the creation of a new government in 2012 suggests that the United States has already begun to pay a bitter price for crossing the Mogadishu line.

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7

Somalia–China relations: China claiming its place as a global actor?

Monika Thakur

Introduction

The issue of China–Africa relations has in recent years received greater attention and critical analysis. A majority of the growing literature on Sino–African relations focuses on China’s relations with resource-rich/economically robust countries or unsavory regimes. For example, China’s relationship with resource-rich and/or unsavory regimes countries such as Sudan, Zimbabwe, Angola, and Nigeria is increasingly well-covered by the media and academic community.¹ Limited attention has, however, been paid to the rest of the African states. It is in these “less significant” countries that China has the potential to have the most impact. China’s footprint on the continent must be understood in a manner that recognizes the diversity of relations between China and African states, rather than a polemic generalization of China’s intentions and Africa’s lack of agency.² Since the African continent is heterogeneous, China’s policy toward the continent will differ and suit the particularities of each country. As such, Somalia is an interesting case study of Chinese engagement. Different from the Chinese support of unsavory regimes or resource-rich/service-rich countries, it is apparent that China is pursuing another type of engagement with the remainder of the continent, focusing on infrastructure development, tapping into a vast consumer base, and geostrategic factors. The purpose of

this chapter is to understand how Chinese engagement with Somalia helps illustrate several dimensions of Beijing's role in the African continent and its broader aspiration as a global actor. The chapter will analyze the depth and extent of Sino–Somali relations, including the range of interests (national, regional, and global) that China perceives to be at stake in Somalia and in the Horn of Africa region.

Sino–African relations have gone through various phases, mainly reflecting changes in China's domestic environment and subsequent shifts in foreign policy priorities and behavior. In the post-World War II period and the process of decolonization, China engaged in a policy of anti-imperialism and there were more close ties with newly independent African states. However, in the context of the Cold War, when many African states chose to align themselves with one of the superpowers, there was a subsequent disruption of relations. Following the Cultural Revolution and shifts in domestic priorities, there was further global isolation of China and breaking of diplomatic relations with several African states.³ With the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989, China's position with regard to growing protests and calls for democratization was severely criticized by Western governments. At that moment, China realized the importance of Africa as a source of international support.⁴ In the post-Cold War period, many African leaders were also facing severe scrutiny in the growing push for democratization, good governance, and human rights, reinforced by Western governments and international organizations such as the World Bank. This pressure allowed African governments and Beijing to empathize with each other and form the foundations of a strong partnership that was solidified in 2000, with the creation of the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). The purpose of FOCAC was to develop and strengthen a mechanism for dialogue and cooperation between China and Africa.⁵ Since then, China has had a strong presence at a continental level (vis-à-vis various FOCAC forums and support to the African Union (AU)) and bilateral level. Overall, Sino–African relations have accelerated since 2000, and China has continued to strengthen to diplomatic, economic, and social links with African states.

China–Somalia relations

Diplomatic relations

China and Somalia established diplomatic relations on 14 December 1960. In 1970 and 1971, Somalia, in coordination with other countries, submitted the motion to the General Assembly of the United Nations on restoring the

legitimate seat of China in the United Nations. From 1960 to 1990, diplomatic ties between the two countries witnessed a smooth and steady advancement. During the period from 1960 to 1990, there were numerous diplomatic visits to and from both countries, including President Mohamed Siad Barre visiting China in 1972 and 1978. However, with the outbreak of the Somali civil war, the Chinese government made efforts to maintain diplomatic relations by closely monitoring the situation in Somalia, and backing global and regional efforts to address and resolve the Somalia issue in a peaceful manner.

By actively engaging in UN discussions on the Somali situation and providing humanitarian assistance, China in 2003 began to act as the UN Security Council coordinator on the Somali issues and has called for more attention to be paid on the country. China was also one of the earliest supporters of the TFG when it was established in October 2004. In addition, China has also supported numerous UN Security Council resolutions on Somalia, the most recent being Resolution 2010 to extend the mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia. In 2010, diplomatic relations continued to grow, with presidents of both countries exchanging congratulatory letters on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

China has made sustained efforts to address the global challenges of piracy off the coast of Somalia. Since 2008, China has been dispatching escort fleets to the Gulf of Aden and Somali waters, and by the end of 2010, seven escort fleets have been dispatched, escorting 3,100 Chinese and foreign vessels on 278 voyages. As well, since 2009, China has been actively involved in the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, a group that aims to strengthen cooperation with countries in the region and globally to fight piracy.⁶

Economic relations

Political instability in Somalia and the lack of comprehensive statistics make the analysis of Sino-Somali economic relations rather difficult. However, despite the departure of most Chinese nationals from Somalia in 1991, the two countries have maintained a sustained, albeit small, economic relationship. The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) does not maintain any trade statistics, but according to Chinese records, in 2002, the total trade volume between the two countries amounted to US\$3.39 million. This increased to \$19.64 million in 2005.⁷ There have been numerous—although dated—economic, trade, and technical cooperation agreements signed between both governments in 1963, 1978, and 1980.⁸ Major Chinese-funded projects include: National Theatre; the Hargeisa water supply project; Somalia Cigarette Manufactory;

Somalia Banadir Hospital; Somalia Stadium; road between Beled Weyne and Burao; Barrouen Farm; Fanole Farm; and a hydro-power station.⁹ However, in last decade, China has not undertaken significant infrastructure or “show-piece” projects in the country, although the Chinese government did pledge to rehabilitate the presidential palace, national stadium and theater—all located in Mogadishu. However, the details of these projects have been ambiguous, and it remains uncertain if the projects were ever undertaken (or completed).¹⁰

There have been recent efforts by Chinese companies to explore for oil in the country. The Chinese-owned oil company, Chinese National Off-shore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), won the bid for oil exploration in Somalia (in the north Mudug region, in northern Puntland, approximately 500 km northeast of Mogadishu). Although companies, including Agip, Shell, and BP, spent over US\$150 million on onshore exploration in the 1980s and 1990s, no oil reserves were discovered. However, it is estimated that Puntland province has the potential to yield a total of 5–10 billion barrels of oil. Puntland is a semi-autonomous region (not independent like Somaliland), and relatively stable compared to Mogadishu.¹¹ A 2007 deal reportedly gave CNOOC and its smaller partner, China International Oil and Gas, the right to 49 percent of the profits from any oil they find, and the remaining amount goes to the interim government.¹² Additionally, a British firm, Rovagold, was given permission to prospect for oil off the Somaliland coast in collaboration with two Chinese firms, including the state-owned China Petrochemical Corporation (SINOPEC) in 2001.¹³ However, little information on the progress and legitimacy of both these activities has been reported, and are subject to ongoing changes in the political landscape of Somalia.¹⁴

What is interesting to note is the willingness of China to invest in Somalia, despite the various security and political challenges. China remains undeterred by local conditions and is willing to take political risks that Western firms are not necessarily able (or willing) to take. China’s “energy cooperation” with the Khartoum government during the Sudanese civil war is a reaffirmation of this tenacity. Rather than purchasing oil on the global markets, like the United States, China prefers to secure control of the resources it needs. However, since China’s oil firms lack the technical capabilities and the political clout of Western oil firms, China prefers to deal with regions that are out of reach to the competition.

In addition, Somalia’s rapidly growing telecommunications sector is powered predominantly by Chinese equipment. Chinese companies provide “soft loans” to the telecom operators to purchase equipment (approximately USD 25 million in 2008). Due to the security situation, Chinese companies are some of the few that are willing to send technicians into the country to set up and maintain the equipment.¹⁵

Supporting peace and security in Somalia

UN engagement

A majority of China's engagement on African peace and security issues are mainly within the context and domain of the UN Security Council. Beijing generally acquiesced to UN multilateral interventions in civil conflicts, including in Somalia in 1991. However, China was defiant on contentious issues such as on humanitarian intervention, the use of force, and establishing international criminal tribunals, by abstaining on these issues 41 times between 1990 and 1999.¹⁶ In recent years however, China has taken on a much more positive and proactive view on greater engagement with the international community, to the point that China considers the UN Security Council to be a significant global actor responsible for peace and conflict management.¹⁷

With regard to Somalia, China used its position in the Security Council to bring attention to the security situation in Somalia, especially, in 2006. China played an instrumental and constructive role in Security Council debates on sanctions and arms embargos against the country, as well providing critical support to the passing of Resolution 1725, which encouraged the AU and subregional organization, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), to establish a peace support mission in Somalia.¹⁸ Overall, China had repeatedly pushed the Security Council to focus its attention on the conflict in Somalia, as well as encouraging regional organizations to spearhead peace and security initiatives, with the support of the United Nations.¹⁹ By actively engaging in UN discussions on the Somali situation and providing humanitarian assistance, China in 2003 began to act as the UN Security Council coordinator on Somali issues and has continued to call for more attention to be paid on the country, including pushing the Security Council to extend the mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) (Security Council resolution 2010).²⁰

Supporting regional efforts

The multilateral political landscape of Africa has seen many changes over the past decade with the AU and subregional organizations playing a more significant role in security issues in the continent. The AU's Peace and Security Council has been especially proactive in managing and resolving conflicts. AMISOM, a regional peacekeeping mission operation undertaken by the AU, with the approval of the UN Security Council, has been active since 2006, in addressing the key security challenges after the collapse of the Islamic Courts

Union and supporting the TFG. The AU peacekeeping mission replaced the Peace Support Mission in Somalia which was spearheaded by the subregional body, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Peacekeeping efforts in Somalia undertaken by the IGAD and the AU illustrate the dynamic role of regional organizations in the African continent. Aside from supporting the TFG, AMISOM is further mandated to implement a national security plan, train the Somali security forces, monitor the security situation, assist with the repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons, and create a stable and secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance.²¹

In this regard, China is increasingly engaging with the AU, as a broader strategy to encourage the international community to not only focus on the national, regional, and global security challenges posed by an unstable Somalia, but also to prominently highlight the significant role of regional and subregional actors in conflict management in the Horn of Africa region.²² China has also made pledges to assist these regional organizations, although this support has been largely symbolic and has yet to translate into significant levels of financial assistance. Unlike the United States and European Union, both of which provide financial assistance to African regional organizations through specific programs, such as the US Global Peace Operations Initiative and the EU African Peace Facility, China's assistance is given on an *ad hoc* basis in the form of grants to support specific mediation or peacekeeping initiatives.²³ In 2006, China had provided \$1.8 million to the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS), which has been its largest financial contribution to the AU—understandably so, in light of Beijing's close relationship, based on "energy cooperation," with Sudan since the 1980s.²⁴ In addition, in 2009, China provided \$300,000 to AMISOM and in 2010, donated \$1.3 million to the AU, of which a portion was earmarked for the AMISOM.²⁵ However, despite the low level of financial support, the institutionalization of dialogue with regional bodies will allow China in the future to assess potential areas that it could provide assistance. As well, as a normative turn, China is reinforcing the view that security issues in Africa may well be better served by regional organizations and initiatives, as opposed to "grander" UN efforts and perhaps also external military alliances, such as NATO.

AntiPiracy efforts

Outside of the United Nations, another crucial aspect of China's engagement with Somalia has been Beijing's active participation and support of multilateral antipiracy initiatives in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia. While this participation can be attributed in part to the geopolitical concerns and

protection of national interests, China's involvement illustrates that it is willing to share the burden of sustaining international peace and security as a responsible global power. As well, this falls in line with China's sustained efforts at the Security Council to bring attention to helping address the perpetual state of political instability in Somalia—which is at the root of the increased levels of piracy attacks. In addition, China's participation in these antipiracy efforts illustrate that it is ready to work closely with external actors, including the United States and European Union. China's engagement also brings more credibility to the antipiracy mission, as it has the potential to appease the skeptical view held by many African leaders on the underlying intentions of Western powers.

The increased level of piracy attacks in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia over the past 10 years has propelled the international community to coordinate their actions and combat this security issue. The coordinated and sizeable response from the international community, including China, can largely be explained as a response to the commercial and economic threats that pirate attacks in this key shipping corridor represent. As such, there are currently a number of international naval task forces operating in the Horn of Africa region, and counterpiracy operations are coordinated through a monthly conference group referred to as Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE), which includes representatives from well over 20 countries and organizations, including NATO, EU, US, Japan, China, and India.²⁶

Currently, this multilateral mission includes naval forces from various countries including China. Starting in late 2008, China dispatched three warships and a supply ship to the Gulf of Aden, including a special armed team. This was a major turning point in modern China's military history, as it was the first operational deployment outside of Asia.²⁷ China to date has maintained this three-ship flotilla of two warships and one supply ship in the Gulf of Aden; and this fleet has been rotated roughly every four months. The Chinese navy, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), has operated independently, escorting ships through its own route which ran parallel to that of the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) managed by a combination of EU, United States, and NATO operations.²⁸ Beginning in November 2012, "China dispatched 13 batches of 34 warships to engage in escort missions for 4,901 vessels in 515 batches, more than half of which are foreign vessels."²⁹

At the November 2012 Security Council session, the Chinese representative emphasized China's continued commitment to international cooperation in fighting piracy, especially in the Gulf of Aden and the Somali waters. Wang Min, Chinese deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, stated that that international cooperation has been successful in combatting piracy

especially due to enhanced communication and coordination of actions. However, he reiterated that it is imperative for the international community to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries concerned, guided by the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea.³⁰ At the same meeting, it was stated that China's navy dispatched escort warships since December 2008, and the "escort missions [were] 100 percent successful."³¹

Although China's contribution is relatively small in size, its importance must not be understated. A high-ranking Chinese official has said "the Chinese Navy's involvement will also show that China is a major responsible power willing to cooperate multilaterally."³² In addition, during China's initial contribution to the mission, there was some speculation that China was planning to establish a permanent military base in East Africa (specifically in Djibouti) to support its operations in the Gulf of Aden,³³ as retired Rear Admiral Cheuk Yin argued that a permanent base would be necessary to avoid the long journeys required to resupply the Chinese navy.³⁴ However, this view has not been further articulated, due to the policy of nonintervention being the guiding principle of Chinese foreign policy. Also, China lacks the institutional and strategic capacity to counter unconventional and asymmetric security threats in the high seas.³⁵

China's primary motivation for deploying ships to the Gulf of Aden is to protect Chinese ships carrying cargo and supplies. According to Weltz, "China possesses one of the world's largest commercial shipping fleets and relies heavily on international maritime commerce."³⁶ Chinese ships have been regularly targeted, as they pass through the Gulf of Aden or in the high seas off the East African coast. Up to 20 percent of China's maritime traffic was subject to pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden during 2008.³⁷ For example, on 19 October 2009, the cargo ship, *De Xin Hai*, owned by Qingdao Ocean Shipping Company, carrying coal and 25 Chinese crew members aboard, was hijacked by Somali pirates.³⁸ The *MV Golden Blessing* was hijacked, along with the Chinese crew of 19 in 2010.³⁹ In light of this, it became apparent that China's commercial interests are very much at the heart of its engagement in antipiracy initiatives.

However, China's involvement in this mission will provide the country with valuable experience, not only in terms of working and collaborating with other states, but also identifying key challenges as regards the navy's capacity to operate in various circumstances. It will also serve as an opportunity for China to assess how to further develop its naval modernization plan, especially in terms of equipment and training,⁴⁰ while also falling in line with the Chinese military's core objective of increasing its capacity to perform multiple military tasks and operations, as articulated in the National Defence White Papers of 2006 and 2008.⁴¹

But it should be noted that beyond China's commercial and national security interests, Beijing still views its role in the region as being to highlight underlying challenges and long-term solutions. Li Baodong, China's representative to the UN Security Council, stated in June 2010 that the root causes of "endless internal conflict . . . and the lack of governance" must be further addressed within a comprehensive international response to the piracy. He further asserted that more attention should be paid to conflict management, political dialogue, strengthening the AU peacekeeping mission, providing development assistance, and developing a regional strategy to address the security challenges in Somalia.⁴²

China's contribution to multilateral antipiracy efforts is also reflective of a change in how Beijing understands global security and its role in providing it. By escorting UN World Food Program shipments in March 2011, China exercised its capability to project naval power beyond its own shore, illustrating that the country is able to protect its national interests while also support humanitarian efforts.⁴³ Chinese media have reported that China's engaged role in the antipiracy mission illustrates that China wants to "show its worth as a global player."⁴⁴ In addition, China's mission is a solid example of its willingness and ability to cooperate with the international community on African security issues, as opposed to being involved primarily in dialogue on the issue. For example, the EU has engaged in strategic discussion with China on African security issues, especially antipiracy efforts, as noted in China-EU Summit held in 2009, although this has not yet led to any proactive policy collaboration between the two actors.⁴⁵

The convergence of China's commercial interests and international cooperation is best exemplified by the Sino-US bilateral antipiracy military drills undertaken in September 2012. The United States and China launched major naval exercises to illustrate the global political will to keep oil shipping lanes open in the Indian Ocean. Over the past years, Somali pirates have attacked hundreds of merchant ships carrying "everything from Middle East crude oil tankers to cargo ships loaded with Chinese goods bound for Europe and America." The US guided-missile destroyer USS Winston S. Churchill was paired together with Chinese navy frigate, the Yi Yang, for training in boarding, search, and seizure.⁴⁶

Additionally, China continues to reinforce that the United Nations is the most appropriate body to coordinate dialogue and policy on African peace and security matters. This logic fundamentally rests on China's perception of how African leaders tend to view "Western" involvement in the continent. By emphasizing the role of the United Nations, Beijing wants to deflect the view that it is now cooperating with the "West" on African security issues and has thus abandoned its long-held foreign policy imperative of noninterference.

Hence, China continues to articulate a much more multilateral-based UN approach toward Africa and reinforces its position as a dominant actor in African states as well as a sympathetic partner in South–South cooperation.

Logic underlying China's engagement in Somalia

At the heart of the Sino–Somali relationship are a number of unarticulated policy strategies of both countries. For its part, China is internally a country in transition, while, at the same time, it is attempting to find its place on the world scene. China's approach to Africa as a continent is as multifaceted as the continent itself; therefore, making general assertions on the logic of Chinese engagement in Africa is unfruitful and ignores the pragmatic and nuanced approach China employs on the continent. China's more active engagement with Africa is part of its continuing emergence as a truly global player and, as such, is no different from the traditional behavior of major powers. In its global and regional diplomacy, China, like all major powers, is pursuing multiple objectives, including those that create tensions between values and interests at both the national and global levels. China can no more be expected to subordinate its commercial and strategic interest to other considerations than have the Western powers in their policies toward Africa and the world. Broadly, China's Africa policy should be viewed not as a mere quest for resources but in the context of its diplomatic strategic pursuits and global foreign policy objectives, including: solidifying its position as a global power, on a par with other permanent members of the UNSC; sustaining and protecting its economic growth and human development; and politically, ensuring a "one China" policy while also countering secession drives by minority groups within China, including Tibetans and the Uyghur people. In pursuing these objectives, China seeks the political and diplomatic support of UN member countries, particularly from the developing world. As the largest regional group within the UN system, Africa is a natural ally on which Beijing has become closely dependent to further its political objectives.

China recognizes the geostrategic importance of Somalia. However, China is still behind both the United States and the EU in terms of economic and military support to the country and region. The strategic importance of Somalia has been internalized by the United States and EU, as witnessed by the relatively higher levels of economic and military support provided to Somalia, and more broadly, to countries in the Horn of Africa region. Nonetheless, diplomatic and economic relations between China and Somalia have been consistent for the

past 50 years, despite many years of political instability and civil war. Beijing has remained friendly to the various regimes in Somalia, and continues to do so with the TFG. Economic investment, although low, continues to increase—and China could play a dynamic role in economic growth and development, as the country transitions toward some level of stability. China has also made consistent efforts to bring Somali security issues to international forums, including the UN Security Council, and pushed the international community to undertake more robust policy actions in Somalia and the region.

China's efforts to assist Somalia with security issues help reinforce China's ambitions in the broader Horn of Africa region. A stable Horn of Africa region allows China to strengthen economic and diplomatic partnerships with major actors in the region, specifically Sudan and Ethiopia. China has had friendly diplomatic relations with most of the countries in the region, the first being Sudan in 1959. China has been highly successful in convincing countries in the region to support its initiatives in international organizations, while aligning itself with African proposals supported by countries in the region. For example, in 2006, Ethiopia's Parliament approved a resolution in support of Beijing's Anti-Secession Law. For China, the support it receives from countries in the region, and Africa in general, specifically on its position on human rights is invaluable. Ethiopia and Eritrea have been voting members of the UN Commission on Human Rights until 2006, and Sudan was a member until 2007. Any attempts to censure China for its human rights record were thwarted due to the support Sudan, Ethiopia, and other African states provided to China in the UN commission.⁴⁷ China, in turn, has reciprocated by lending its support to the governments of Ethiopia and Sudan—countries that have long been criticized for their human rights records. China's efforts in the Horn of Africa region reinforce its long-standing policy of managing domestic policy/sentiment in the international arena.

Through its trade promotion and investment programs, China has become one of the Horn of Africa region's most significant partners. With the exception of oil-rich Sudan, China's trade with the region is heavily weighted in China's favor. For example, in 2006, Chinese exports to Ethiopia made up over 93 percent of their bilateral trade, and Chinese purchases from Ethiopia were negligible.⁴⁸ To correct this lopsided trade relationship, Beijing scrapped tariffs on 442 commodities from 25 African states, including those from the Horn of Africa.⁴⁹ The Chinese government has also supported economic development through low-cost loans, debt relief, development assistance, and preferential tariffs, especially for coffee, sesame seeds, and leather goods. Chinese companies have developed and implemented commercial and assistance projects such as roads and bridges, power and water supply stations, irrigation and telecommunications networks, and housing. China

is also greatly involved in oil exploration in Somalia and Ethiopia, and has had “energy cooperation” relations with Sudan since 1995.⁵⁰ It is apparent that China realizes the strategic importance of the Horn of Africa, especially protecting its commercial and diplomatic interests in countries such as Sudan and Ethiopia. China’s calculation to help stabilize Somalia through multilateral and bilateral efforts reinforces its broader strategy to secure Chinese presence in the Horn of Africa.

From the perspective of Somalia, China is viewed as one of many partners that will help the country achieve peace, stability, and development in the country. In the broader context of Sino–African relations, China’s cooperation with Somalia, like other African countries, comes with limited political strings and does not hinge on certain conditionalities pertaining to specific political objectives or standards, like Western donors. The notable exception is of course the “One China” policy, which focuses on the rejection of Taiwan and on Beijing as the only legitimate representative of China. The possibility of China making a constructive contribution to democratization, as Tull notes, is far-fetched.⁵¹ However, China’s defence of sovereignty and nonintervention, at a rhetorical level, will continue to challenge Western attempts to dominate the country and Horn of Africa region.

In its relations with Somalia, China has successfully intertwined its commercial and national interests with its aspirations of being recognized as a major global actor. China has significantly engaged in sustained global diplomatic endeavors, especially in the Security Council, to highlight the importance of peace and security issues in Somalia, while also emphasizing the need to focus on the root of the problem—Somalia’s perpetual security crisis and lack of governance. As well, China has displayed a strong desire to work within regional and multilateral frameworks to foster stability in Somalia and the Horn of Africa region. This proactive behavior falls in line with Beijing’s efforts to be seen not only as an active global actor, but also one that strives to work multilaterally, exhibiting significant levels of soft power. This soft power serves as a counterweight against those major powers, especially the United States, Japan, and European states, which view China’s meteoric economic rise as a threat to their national interests. In addition, China’s championing of Somalia and its strengthening of Sino–African relations will help to raise China’s own international influence and that of developing countries as a whole, thereby adding further importance to the normative rise of South–South cooperation, as illustrated by the diplomatic engagements of the *ad hoc* group BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).

China has made a significant shift in its foreign policy by actively deploying the PLAN to address piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia, within the context of multilateral, UN-endorsed antipiracy missions. According

to Weitz, the Chinese being part of the antipiracy mission is the result of “a pragmatic weighing of the possible advantages and disadvantages of participating in this specific operation, rather than a revolutionary transformation in Beijing’s definition of its appropriate global security role.”⁵² From the vantage point of the Chinese leadership, the conditions of the deployment, although not without risks, appeared to be unusually favorable, entailing low probable costs and many likely benefits for China.

At a fundamental level, China’s economic and national interests rest on protecting Chinese ships and investments, which could fall prey to the rise of instability and piracy in the Horn of Africa and East Africa regions. China’s interests are no different from those of the United States, European states, Japan, India, and others, who wish to safeguard their economic assets. At a strategic level, the PLAN’s participation in the mission enables the Chinese military to expand its power projection capabilities, and will enhance its capability to protect critical maritime lines of community and transportation that connect Chinese goods and services to the global market. The Gulf of Aden is a strategic shipping route for crude oil from the Gulf region; and this is of particular importance to China, as more than half of China’s imported oil originates from the Middle East as well as large amounts of primary commodities from the rest of Africa.⁵³ As an economic powerhouse, China must make sure it is able to maintain a safe movement of goods through the various shipping routes, so as to safeguard the imports that are essential to run the Chinese economy. To further consider the strategic motivations, China’s antipiracy mission in Somalia will provide PLAN with the opportunity to develop its military capabilities, tactics, and training by operating in close proximity with several experienced navies. Although states such as the United States may view China’s increasing military power as a threat, in the context of the antipiracy mission, the United States has made significant efforts to engage in high-level Sino-American military dialogue. However, the PRC refused to resume this dialogue, after the Bush administration announced its planned \$6.5 billion arms sale to Taiwan in October 2008.⁵⁴

At a normative level, China is taking on its role as a rising global power with tenacity, by recognizing that it has an obligation to contribute to international security. Fulfilling this obligation will not only improve China’s global image as a supporter of peace and stability, but could also potentially ease the perception that China is a global threat, especially to Western states. China’s active engagement in pushing Security Council resolutions regarding Somalia’s security problems, supporting regional efforts for peacekeeping, as well as the deployment of naval ships, clearly signals that China is making significant efforts to participate more actively in global security management. In addition, China’s increasing efforts to foster multilateral cooperation on Somalia

illustrate that China is willing to work within a more multilateral framework. Although there are less concrete examples illustrating Beijing's willingness to cooperate with states in a more practical, on-ground level—such as the low success rate of the EU's efforts to court Chinese cooperation in Africa—it can be seen as a potentially positive sign for setting up a foundation for future collaborative engagements.⁵⁵

Conclusion

Since Africa is heterogeneous, China's policy toward the continent will differ and suit the particularities of each country. As such, Somalia is an interesting case study of Chinese engagement. Different from the Chinese support of unsavory regimes such as in Zimbabwe and Sudan, or resource-rich/service-rich countries such as Sudan, Angola, Nigeria, and South Africa, it is apparent that China is pursuing another type of engagement with Somalia, focusing on specific economic, strategic, and normative goals, while also playing an advocacy role for Somali peace and security issues, as well as supporting multilateral antipiracy missions in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia.

It is important to note that China's activities in Somalia, in particular, and in Africa, in general, are part of its continuing emergence as a global power, and as such are no different from what major powers have traditionally done, although the rhetoric of a political discourse based on "solidarity," noninterference, sovereignty, and anti-imperialism adds a nuanced dimension of great power strategies. As well, in its relations with Somalia, China is pursuing multiple objectives; and therefore, China can no longer be expected to subordinate its commercial and strategic interests of the United States, EU, Japan, India, etc., as they have done and continue to do. Nevertheless, it should be noted that China has made significant strides in supporting the security efforts in Somalia vis-a-vis diplomacy at the Security Council, support to regional organizations and initiatives, and deploying ships as part of multilateral efforts to combat piracy. However, Beijing has consistently emphasized that the international response to combat piracy must be seen within a broader context of addressing root causes including endemic internal conflict, lack of governance and poverty. Therefore, China brings forth a much more nuanced strategy to the international community regarding Somalia, which includes among other things conflict management, political dialogue, strengthening the AU peacekeeping mission, providing development assistance, and developing a regional strategy to address the security challenges in Somalia. The key

challenge China faces is: will it be ready and willing to claim its position as a global power to spearhead such multilateral initiatives?

Notes

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8

Japan's aspirations as a global security actor: The antipiracy mission off Somalia and the dynamics of Great Power intervention

Yee-Kuang Heng

In March 2009, two naval warships, the destroyers JS *Sazanami* and the JS *Samidare* from the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) deployed to the waters off Somalia on antipiracy patrols. Two P-3C Orion maritime patrol planes dispatched from the JMSDF Atsugi Air Base on 28 May 2009 also began flying surveillance missions out of Djibouti. Signaling its intentions to commit for the long-haul, Japan's first overseas military base since World War II in Djibouti was later established in 2011. Tokyo's latest deployment overseas only received the green light after the usual political debate, legal, and constitutional wrangling that accompanies any Japanese military deployment.¹ Nonetheless, by October 2012, according to calculations based on figures from Japan Defence Focus newsletters and the Japan Ministry of Defence website,² Japan has committed a total of 3994 personnel, 17 destroyers escorting 2,762 vessels, and eight patrol aircraft conducting a total of 779 flights since June 2009. The first sustained, long-range overseas deployment of this kind for an officially pacifist nation sensitive to deployment of military force raises many intriguing questions. Why Somalia of all places? Official trade and investment between the two countries is negligible, based on official Japanese government statistics. Diplomatic ties and people-to-people

relations barely exist, especially since the collapse of the Somali central government in 1991.

Yet Japan's naval deployment is highly indicative of the ways in which the conflict in Somalia has become globalized in more ways than one. Ironically, far from being the "orphan conflict" that it was for much of the 1990s and 2000s, the renewed intense international focus on the Somali piracy problem suggests that the Great Powers of the day, including a previously reticent Japan, have now sought to some extent "own" the issue. This new-found interest has two dimensions, both localized and globalized. First, there is a rather narrowly defined willingness on the part of the international community to address the "local" piracy problem without necessarily resolving the long-festered Somali conflict once and for all. In other words, the emphasis is more on treating the symptoms and salving the wounds rather than the cause. Secondly, and at the same time, the Great Powers have found in the Somali pirates a larger challenge beyond Somalia itself, and with far more significant geo-strategic implications. Indeed, it is not so much Somalia itself that concerns Tokyo, although Japan has been a generous donor of developmental aid and has recently increased its engagement with Africa over resource access. Rather it is what traverses Somalia, in the form of precious Japanese trade on its way elsewhere, Japanese-owned shipping, as well as Japanese seamen. It is as much about maintaining the free flows of goods and people that globalization depends on, as well as protecting Japan's national interests as a major seafaring nation. In short, there are global as well as national interests at stake. Lurking in the background as yet another compelling driver was China's own high-profile naval deployment generating headlines worldwide. Japan had to respond to demonstrate its status as a responsible major power managing global security challenges. As the waters off Somalia turn into a geo-political chessboard for the Great Powers, both opportunities and dangers lie in store. It has the potential to foster new avenues of cooperation as well as fuel greater strategic competition.

This chapter begins by examining the depth and extent of Somali-Japanese relations, and the range of interests, both national and global, that Tokyo perceives to be at stake in the piracy issue. It then examines how the Somali case illuminates several dimensions of Japan's aspirations to play a more active role in global security. No doubt there are familiar constraints that Japan labors under, such as the legal and operational limits placed on its deployment. Yet the deployment also breaks new ground, literally, in the establishment of Japan's first permanent overseas base since World War II, in Djibouti to support the ongoing mission. In a sign of further incremental evolution, new antipiracy legislations passed in June 2009 also confer greater latitude to Japanese military deployments. On balance though, Japan's aspiration to be a global

security actor demonstrated over Somali piracy appears to be taking more of an evolutionary step than a revolutionary one. Somalia in this sense is merely the latest chapter in Japan's long-running agonizing over its global security role. This chapter will then turn to examine how Japan's response to piracy off Somalia reflects a microcosm of the emerging multi-polar international system. The leading powers of the day, including Japan, have all defined piracy as an issue that they have the responsibility to manage in a globalized world, by demonstrating the necessary will and military capability to do so. How far the international antipiracy patrols off Somalia are able to foster greater cooperation or competition between the emerging Great Powers of Asia could well prove to be its most lasting strategic legacy.

Background to Japan–Somalia relations

The bilateral relationship between Japan and Somalia can hardly be described as close. Tokyo's decision to deploy is not strictly speaking out of concern for the bilateral relationship, or more accurately whatever is left of it after the collapse of the central Somali government in 1991. The following brief survey of Japan–Somali relations only serves to reiterate the point that Tokyo had little at stake intrinsically in Somalia itself. Japanese–Somali diplomatic relations have a history of some four decades after Tokyo recognized the independence of Somalia in July 1960. Yet it was only two decades later that Somalia eventually established an Embassy in Tokyo in October 1982. The Embassy was closed in 1990 and has not reopened since. Japan itself does not have an embassy in Somalia. Instead, the Japanese diplomatic mission in Kenya is also accredited to Somalia. In terms of VIP visits, according to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) website, the only Japanese official to travel to Somalia was at the Parliamentary Vice-Minister level when Mr Kakizawa visited in 1992. In January 2010, there was a visit to Japan by H.E. Mr Ali Ahmed Jama, “Minister for Foreign Affairs” of the Republic of Somalia. Japan's MOFA chose to present Mr Jama's official title in quotation marks, implying that question marks hang over the Minister's credentials.

Besides the low-level diplomatic contacts between the two countries, people-to-people contacts also appear negligible. The number of Japanese nationals residing in Somalia stood at a grand total of zero (at least as of 1 October 1999 the last available official date for which figures are available) according to data from the Japanese MOFA in October 2012.³ Japan does have aid workers operating in the region, though this hardly qualifies as any form of significant sustained people-to-people or cultural engagement. For

instance, in 2008 a Japanese woman working for Medecins du Monde was abducted by Somali militants near the Ethiopian border.⁴

As for economic ties, figures from 2008 (the latest available data) show that Japanese exports to Somalia amounted to a meager 295 million Yen (around 3.2 million USD in 2013). Imports from Somalia stood at measly 12 million Yen.⁵ Somalia also had the rare distinction of being one of the few countries in the world where direct investment from a major economy like Japan was almost zero. This brief background to Japan–Somali bilateral relations suggests that Tokyo's direct interests in Somalia the country itself is relatively shallow, whether in terms of economic and commercial ties, people-to-people exchanges or diplomatic relations.

Japan's decision to deploy: National and global interests

While Japan's stake over Somalia in and of itself is not particularly significant, the decision to deploy JMSDF vessels *in spite* of this lack of direct interests is noteworthy. Indeed, analyzing how Japanese policymakers justify their deployment reveals insights into how Tokyo not only perceives its national interests, but also its evolving security role on the global stage.

Tokyo's decision to deploy is dictated most apparently by real concerns over piracy and its detrimental consequences for Japanese shipping and trade. The Gulf of Aden carries 90 percent of Japanese exports, before reaching the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, and finally the European markets. In this sense, it is strictly Japanese national interests that are affected by the Somali piracy issue. Several Japanese vessels have been attacked or hijacked. Japan's shipping industry lobbied the government of the day to launch antipiracy operations. As then-PM Taro Aso noted when announcing the deployment of JMSDF ships, "the Japanese Shipowners' Association and others have urged the government to reinforce its measures against acts of piracy, including the development of a legal system."⁶ According to the Japan Shipowners' Association, about 2,100 Japan-related vessels alone are estimated to require protection from JMSDF destroyers. For instance, the 150,000-ton oil tanker *Takayama* was struck by rocket-propelled grenades in 2008. Fortunately, a German patrol was able to come to its rescue. In 2007, pirates hijacked the chemical tanker *Golden Mori*, releasing it allegedly after a ransom was agreed. On 22 March 2009, a vehicle-carrying vessel belonging to Mitsui OSK Lines Ltd was attacked by pirates about 1,500 km south of where JMSDF destroyers were operating. This incident highlighted the mammoth task and

distances involved, even if JMSDF were to focus on protecting just Japanese shipping alone, not to mention *all* maritime traffic. In October 2010, the Japanese vessel *Izumi* was hijacked. In 2010 alone, there were at least 10 pirate attacks on ships operated or owned by Japanese companies. According to then-PM Aso, “for Japan, which is surrounded by the sea and for which foreign trade holds a high degree of importance, including its dependence on the importation of a large proportion of major resources, ensuring the security of maritime traffic is critical for its economy and society and for the daily lives of its people.”⁷

Merely maintaining its trade alone is not the sole issue at stake here though. Tokyo’s decision to deploy naval forces appears driven by interlocking, mutually reinforcing global and national interests. Japanese policymakers presented the deployment not just solely in terms of Japanese national interests but more broadly the global repercussions of rampant piracy. “Piracy is a threat to the international community, including Japan, and it is an issue that should be dealt with immediately,” Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada said after issuing the deployment order in March 2009. “It is the government’s important responsibility to protect the lives and property of the Japanese in the waters, which is an essential marine traffic area for our country.”⁸ The issue of Japan’s *responsibility* to play a more important visible role in global security affairs was also apparent, particularly in the wake of China’s own deployment. The Somalia deployment, according to then-PM Aso was therefore one of the “responsibilities that Japan should clearly discharge as a member of international society.”⁹ Indeed, a *Yomiuri Shimbun* editorial on 27 December 2008 urged that in light of China’s own deployment on the antipiracy mission, “to fulfill its international responsibilities, Japan (too) must consider various possible measures.” Similarly, Beijing’s motives for deployment also appear to be partly fuelled by a desire to demonstrate China’s newfound status as a “responsible stakeholder” in the international community.¹⁰ As both Asian giants dwell on the notion of “responsibility” as a major power, Amelia George noted that Japan’s apparent desire to match China’s move for move means that,

The maritime anti-piracy operation is a case of Japan wanting to be out there with the big boys and not wanting to be left behind, particularly in the wake of China’s participation. It was China’s engagement that triggered Japan’s; so the primary driver is political, relating to Japan’s international image and not allowing China to get the jump on them.¹¹

Indeed, according to Waseda University Professor Shigemura Toshimitsu: “The government, diplomats, and the policymakers in the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs are very afraid. Before, China did not feel able to cooperate in global military operations with the US or other nations, but that has clearly changed. I foresee Beijing increasingly projecting its power overseas in the future.”¹²

Constitutional and operational constraints to Japanese deployments

Once the decision to deploy had been taken, the lead-up to the actual dispatch of naval forces highlighted once again the long-standing constitutional and operational constraints surrounding deployment of Japanese military forces overseas. The compromise solution that was finally reached represents yet another small tentative step forward in the ongoing debate on Japan's ability to address global security issues. It is fair to say that “the deployment is significant, but hardly a major step in the evolution of Japan's defense and security policy.”¹³

In contrast to more controversial deployments to Iraq to assist in humanitarian reconstruction or to the Indian Ocean to refuel coalition vessels engaged in Afghanistan, the Somali issue was portrayed as a relatively straightforward “police action” and hence, not as politically sensitive. Helping to smooth ruffled feathers and public opinion, any such mission would receive explicit UN approval and endorsement including Resolution 1816 of the United Nations Security Council in December 2008 which authorized foreign vessels to enter Somalia's territorial waters to stop piracy and armed robbery at sea. As such, the campaign against piracy was presented as more a crime-fighting operation than a strictly military one. For example, then-Prime Minister Aso “insisted that prior approval by the Diet before SDF dispatch is unnecessary on the grounds that the use of weapons against pirates, who are *criminals*, does not constitute a military action as prohibited by the Constitution.”¹⁴ To gauge public opinion before the deployment, a survey in January 2009 conducted by the Japanese Cabinet Office demonstrated that 63.2 percent of Japanese respondents surveyed had a favorable view of the proposed SDF effort against piracy although some 27 percent questioned whether the SDF is the right organization to use if it was indeed a crime-fighting deployment against criminal pirates.¹⁵ Former Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama then in opposition, argued that “logically, this is a job for the coastguard. The people of Japan have absolutely no idea what restrictions will be imposed. Is civilian control really working?”¹⁶ The legal situation thus remained ambiguous, and Japanese politicians felt a need for swift resolution. “Japan has to deal quickly with this issue,” Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura, the then chief

government spokesman, told a news conference. But he also asked, "Are the current laws appropriate for a mission like this? The laws stipulate that, as a general rule, Japanese [military] ships can operate within our territorial waters. But is that OK when we are discussing cooperation with the international community?"¹⁷

In order to allow warships to be deployed more speedily and avoid prolonged legislative debates, Tokyo eventually decided to send ships as "an emergency measure during the short term"¹⁸ according to PM Aso, under an existing maritime police action provision, Article 82 of the Self-Defense Forces Law (Law No. 165, 1954). This states that the Minister of Defense can order the JSDF to do necessary operations in the special case for the maintenance security and protection of human life and wealth under the approval of Prime Minister. Since the JMSDF has no legal mandate to make arrests, Japan Coast Guard (JCG) officers were also deployed to handle police-related matters, such as evidence collection, if pirates are captured. Members of the elite JMSDF Special Boarding Unit were also embarked in case of close encounters that turn nasty. The JMSDF may first fire warning shots, but they cannot harm the pirates except in limited circumstances, such as self-defense. This law further restricts the JMSDF to protect only Japanese ships, or those carrying Japanese crew or cargo. To overcome such constraints, the government proposed a new law enabling JMSDF forces to protect non-Japanese vessels and broader scope for using weapons including permission to fire at pirate boats that ignore warnings. "It is essential that the dispatch take place under a revamped law. We must speed up the process," Minister Hamada said.¹⁹

A more specific "Law on Punishment of and Measures against Acts of Piracy" (Act No. 55 of 2009), was eventually approved in the Japanese Diet on 19 June 2009. The JMSDF can now protect any ship from pirates regardless of their original flag country. It also allows the Coast Guard as well as JMSDF to use weapons to deter acts of piracy; if the pirate disobeys other measures and that there is lack of any other measures to stop the act. However, they still cannot harm pirates except in limited circumstances such as self-defense. Significantly, unlike previous deployments to Iraq or the Indian Ocean, the new law sets no time limits for the operation. Nor is its scope geographically limited to a specific region. With a broad definition of piracy adopted in the legislation, the new antipiracy laws have potentially *global* applicability against pirates free of geographical constraints. Whether the JMSDF is deployed under the new law or the previous more limited maritime action provision,

because piracy is deemed under international law to be a criminal act committed for private ends, as opposed to a politically motivated military

act, anti-piracy measures entailing the use of force constitute policing (allowable) rather than military (non-allowable) actions. Both measures, however, blur the already fraying division between military and anti-criminal actions within Japanese security practices.²⁰

Based on this technical distinction between a criminal as opposed to a military act, the JCG is ostensibly the most appropriate government agency to repel pirates who are classed as criminals. However, JMSDF vessels and personnel may possess capabilities above and beyond what the JCG can deploy, especially if a confrontational situation escalates out of control. Indeed, this was one argument made in predeployment political debates that JCG vessels lack the armored decks of JMSDF ships to repel pirate rocket propelled grenades.

Besides legislative hurdles, logistical and operational constraints also had to be overcome when deploying military assets so far away from the home islands. Advance Japanese Defence Ministry teams first deployed on a fact-finding mission to countries neighboring Somalia, including Yemen, Djibouti, and Oman to inspect ports and airfield facilities that Japan's warships could potentially use.

Assessing achievements

Much attention has focused on Japan's naval deployments in its efforts to combat piracy. However, Japan's overall contribution to the international efforts comprises crucial nonmilitary aid initiatives as well. Under the new Law, the average number of the escorted ships per mission is more than double during the period when JMSDF first deployed under the limited provisions of the Maritime Action law. Indeed, the Ministry of Defence notes that for the month of November 2010 itself, "if the Anti-Piracy Measures Law had not come into force, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyers would not have been able to legally escort 59 of the 73 escorted vessels (the 59 foreign ships not operated by Japanese shipping companies)."²¹ The MOD clearly perceives the new legislation to be effective in allowing JMSDF forces more flexibility to deal with operational requirements of the deployment. Within the month of November 2010 itself, information collected by JMSDF P-3C patrol aircraft was passed to Japanese warships, foreign warships, and commercial vessels 250 times.²²

Beyond these statistical indicators of sorties, patrols, and chasing away pirate vessels, Japan has also sent survey/Overseas Developmental Assistance missions to Yemen and Djibouti to analyze the feasibility of assistance to these countries. Perhaps drawing lessons from its previous successful efforts

combating piracy off the Malacca Straits, Japan believes that improving coastal countries capabilities for preventing piracy and armed robbery is crucial for the resolution of the piracy problem. MOFA's "Rolling Plan for Yemen" observes that,

To secure the navigation of the vessels in a mid-long term, it is essential to enhance the capacity of the Yemeni Coast Guard (YCG), the only coast guard which belongs to a country facing both the coast of Somalia and the Gulf of Aden.²³

To that end, Japan has formulated a Port Cities Development project in Yemen to help economic development in coastal areas hit by piracy as well as capacity building of the Yemen coast Guard. Tokyo has also invited coast guard officials of coastal countries near Somalia to training courses held in Japan.²⁴ ¥3.6 billion has been allocated to help support the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and implement projects in Somalia, as well as to help neighboring countries' capacity development efforts through the International Maritime Organization (IMO). An amount of 1.4 billion JPY (approximately 15 million USD) is to support the implementation of the Djibouti Code by IMO including establishment of a piracy information exchange center in Kenya, Tanzania, and Yemen, and a regional training center in Djibouti and capacity building.²⁵ Tokyo has also provided financial assistance worth \$67 million to the Somali TFG for improvement of security and for children, channelled through international organizations such as United Nations Children's Fund (2007–09).²⁶ Japan's humanitarian assistance focused mainly on providing food, health, water and sanitation, and education. Japan also supported measures to counter human trafficking and irregular migration, strengthening of border management, support and training for the Somali police, and planning for the collection and destruction of small arms in the Horn of Africa region. Japan is also an active member of the Contact Group established by United Nations Security Council on Somali piracy, having hosted previous meetings of this group in Tokyo in 2009.

Prospects and precedents for the Great Powers: Cooperation or competition?

Concerns over piracy and its disruption to trade routes certainly is the main driver for the deployment of naval forces by powers such as Japan. As some shipping lines have diverted on longer and more costly routes, soaring

insurance costs have led shipping associations to clamor for better protection from their national governments. The Gulf of Aden is becoming increasingly important, accounting for 20 percent of global sea trade, being a key shipping route for oil supplies from the Gulf, Chinese and Asian exports to Europe, and African resources. In this sense, the piracy issue is afflicting a key strategic Sea Lane of Communication (SLOC) which are primary maritime routes used for trade, logistics and naval forces. "The Indian Ocean is becoming a central sea lane. . . . China does not trust leaving this vital link in the hands of the US Navy, and wants to guarantee its access."²⁷ If mismanaged, the waters off Somalia and the Indian Ocean could become a modern-day maritime equivalent of the nineteenth century Great Game. The major powers now compete for influence and access to resources and strategic waterways, rather than control over strategic buffer states like Afghanistan was in the past.

The Somali piracy has generated some unexpected consequences far beyond Somali shores, in terms of "transforming geopolitical relationships in East Asia" with longer-term consequences and far more enduring strategic implications than the narrower issue of piracy per se.²⁸ While the naval deployments by powers such as Japan, India, and China are all precedent-setting for the operational histories of individual navies in their own right, a bigger question remains over the extent to which such deployments can help generate cooperative tendencies or stoke preexisting competitive traits with the other Great Powers involved.

Strategic competition

Competitive tit-for-tat dynamics are seen to be emerging on the part of individual countries' responses to the Somali piracy problem. Some analysts suggest that Japan's dispatch of naval destroyers,

on the most basic level, represents the export of a traditional East Asian rivalry to a new part of the world. The timing of the deployment, which came soon after Chinese vessels started patrols, has prompted some to speculate that it was made in direct response to China's decision to send ships to the region.²⁹

For example, in December 2008, China announced the deployment of destroyers *Haikou* and *Wuhan*, two of China's most sophisticated warships to Somalia. In turn, Japan quickly announced it too was considering sending ships. According to then-Defence Minister Yasukazu Hamada, referring to

Japan's military, the then-PM Aso "told me to accelerate studies so that the Self-Defence Forces can take measures against piracy as soon as possible." "Japan should take action in a hurry," Aso said. "We had better consider revising the law, but that will take time. If we have to hasten things, then we should take a defensive posture on the sea."³⁰ The Somalia problem then appears to be useful in serving the timely needs of the various Great Powers involved, presenting unexpected opportunities to push toward achieving wider strategic goals. This is Japan, India, and China's first extended transcontinental naval operational deployment. Indeed,

months or years from now, when Somali piracy is a distant memory, its most enduring legacy will not be the spike it produced in maritime crime, or millions of dollars in ransoms paid by shipping firms and insurance companies. Instead, the piracy along the East African coast will be recalled as the catalyst for the rising navies of India, China and the European Union to deploy far from their homeports, altering who and where they fight.³¹

Rather than merely chasing pirates, this opportunity for emerging powers to send forces far from home might well prove to be the most enduring legacy of the antipiracy patrols off Somalia. Leaving aside the headlines about China's maritime task force, several precedents have already been set for Tokyo. For Japan, the naval dispatch would be a first to African waters far from Asia where JMSDF operates mainly. Additionally, the Japanese forces, which are already very proficient, can gain further valuable blue-water experience on long-range transcontinental deployments. It can also benefit from operating in coordination and cooperation with other sophisticated allied navies such as the US or NATO. In other words, Japan's naval forces "can train in the kind of mission that is old hat to the United States and a number of NATO members."³² Precedents are being set not just on sea. A sign of its will to maintain and sustain its naval presence over the long term, Tokyo has developed a more permanent supply, fuel, and maintenance network along these strategic sea lanes by building increasing diplomatic ties with countries adjoining Somalia that can provide such facilities. To that end, Japan has signed a status of forces agreement (SOFA) with Djibouti, which gives the Japanese forces deployed in Djibouti special privileges and immunities under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. These include allowing Japan the right to exercise within the territory of the Republic of Djibouti criminal jurisdiction and disciplinary powers over all JSDF personnel. Japan spent 40 million US dollars on building a new permanent base in Djibouti to support its naval forces as well as maritime patrol planes, which was completed in March 2011. It will be the third country to have a military base in Djibouti next to the United States and France.

But significantly, it will also be the first long-term overseas military base for Japan since 1945. Previously, Japan's major overseas missions—to Iraq and the Indian Ocean were predominantly for logistical and support purposes such as refueling, transport, and reconstruction. For the Somalia mission, however, Japanese forces will potentially face the same hazards in the same exposed front-line combat position as other navies. If Japanese personnel were to fire at pirates on the high seas, it would be the first time in an overseas mission since the Pacific War. "With each successive adjustment of the legal framework of Japan's security policy, an even greater separation has tended to set in between the original Article 9 aspiration of a force posture that is non-coercive and built around minimal use of force in defense of exclusively individual self-defense ends, and its actual practice on the ground."³³

If Japan perceives several benefits from the Somalia deployment, the same can be said for China. Like Tokyo's initiatives in Djibouti, Beijing's naval commanders have suggested opening regional naval bases possibly in Aden to support antipiracy operations on top of other new port projects in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar. The deployment also provides valuable experience in missions far away from home. Needless to say, this has provoked suspicions from India. Reports have suggested that Indian submarines stalked the Chinese vessels as they navigated the Indian Ocean. The Somalia mission is also an opportunity for China to take a greater role in global security without raising hackles from neighbors, including Japan. Senior Chinese generals argue it is the duty of China as a rising nation to contribute to international security.³⁴ "The general sense is China is now a regional power, and in the economic domain has become a major player with rising economic strength," said Wu Ray-kuo, managing director of political risk at Taipei's Fu-Jen University. "There is also responsibility that comes with it, responsibility not only in the area of financial matters but also in other areas like politics and security."³⁵

The need for cooperation

Despite these ostensible gains and operational benefits for individual nations, the deployment has the potential to serve as a promising example of international cooperation on shared global threats. Japan, India, China, and South Korea all share the same interests in maintaining sea lanes of communication through the Gulf of Aden. While there is no one overall commander of international efforts, there is some coordination through the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) conference which meets

every 3 months. It was established as an avowedly apolitical tool to avoid redundancies within the multiple naval efforts against piracy off Somalia. The piracy issue has also allowed countries such as Japan and Indonesia to try to expand their relationship beyond simply economics and trade to embrace security as well. Japanese diplomats in Jakarta have floated the possibility of joint-antipiracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden.³⁶ Certainly the need for greater cooperation and harmonization exists because,

This patchwork of ad hoc multinational and national initiatives has achieved individual successes, defeating several pirate attacks and capturing some pirates. Despite the unprecedented extent of this effort, the contributions of the approximately dozens of combat ships and thousands of military personnel have been vitiated by insufficient coordination. The various formations have employed different mandates, tactics, and rules of engagement.³⁷

These include NATO flotillas, multinational coalition operations led by the United States such as Combined Task Force 151, EU naval forces under Operation *Atalanta*, individual assets from China and Japan, as well as the international Contact Group of 25 nations. Valencia and Khalid have termed such initiatives the “vigilante” approach to addressing the problem that not only fails to address root causes over the long term, but also allows “for naval powers to demonstrate their prowess, feel each other out, and establish the precedent of unilateral individual and group intervention in such situations.”³⁸ Some of the emerging navies are too closely focused on safeguarding only their own national shipping, and could be used more effectively if coordination was better. Most emerging nations concentrate on simply escorting their own national flag shipping—although India is particularly keen to stress it has escorted vessels of all nationalities.

At a time when Beijing is engaging in rapid military modernization and Tokyo is calling for more transparency in the Chinese military program, the Somalia deployment is turning out to be a rare and much-needed opportunity for Japanese and Chinese military cooperation. On 23 May 2010, Zhang Wendan, commander of the Chinese naval escort taskforce boarded the JMSDF destroyer *Oonami* to exchange information on escort methods and pirate activity. Zhang was paying a return visit after his Japanese counterpart, Captain Minami Takanobu, had boarded the PLAN's *Guangzhou* on 28 April. China did not appear unduly worried or nervous about the Japanese military deployment, and to some observers even welcomed the possibility of such cooperation extending beyond Somalia toward Asian waters. Ren Xiao, research professor at Shanghai's Fudan University, noted that

This time, the reactions in China to the Japanese deployment overseas were more moderate and more relaxed than before. We ourselves have sent anti-piracy naval ships there and I would welcome it if the Chinese and Japanese navy cooperated in the waters off the coast of Somalia," It "could be useful to start working together in Asian waters in the future," referring to the long-standing Sino-Japanese dispute over the ownership of a chain of unpopulated islets in the East China Sea.³⁹

Resulting from the afore mentioned SHADE meetings, from 01 January 2012, China, Japan, and India began to synchronize their naval vessels on antipiracy patrols and best allocate each country's escort resources. The three nations implemented patrol coordination, with China and India taking turns as lead navy before handing off to Japan on 1 July 2012. The PLAN has also begun coordinating its operations with the EU and NATO flotillas in the area. "Chinese collaboration with other navies should be welcomed. The hope is that such co-operation will have a positive normative effect on the civilian and military leadership," said Toshi Yoshihara of the U.S. Naval War College.⁴⁰

Besides possible bilateral cooperation with China, there are also potentially broader multilateral regional cooperative initiatives that Tokyo could suggest. If it played its cards right and carefully, Japan could assume a leadership role in fostering cooperation, especially given its past record in implementing counterpiracy measures in the Malacca Straits. Under Japan's lead in 2004, 16 countries signed the Regional Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery. An information sharing center was established in Singapore and users of the Malacca Straits began to develop a combined framework with the littoral states of Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia to tackle piracy. Indeed, Japanese officials at UN Security Council meetings have made the analogy between Somalia and the Malacca Straits,

Japan has gained practical experience in this area through its initiative to realize the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP). It is our belief that, against this background, we can provide useful expertise in regard to the possible creation of a cooperation framework similar to ReCAAP in the region neighboring Somalia.⁴¹

However, numerous geographical and strategic differences between Malacca and Somalia exist that make direct analogies problematic, not least the existence of functioning littoral states such as Malaysia and Singapore with the capacity to implement initiatives. Nonetheless, there exists potential for cooperative dynamics to emerge under Tokyo's leadership.

Conclusion

The long-festering Somalia conflict has taken on a whole new dimension as a result of the piracy scourge plaguing its lawless coasts. The Somali conflict, for much of the 1990s, was seen as a mostly “localized” humanitarian problem that the international community had tried and failed to resolve with the disastrous intervention in 1992–93. After 9/11, Somalia then became entangled with Islamist groups attracting off-shore US military involvement through missile and air strikes. With the worsening piracy problem, it has now morphed once again into a microcosm of broader seismic shifts in global power and influence, where the aspiring Great Powers of the day such as China and India come cheek-to-jowl with more established ones such as Japan.

Tokyo’s deployment of naval vessels to the Gulf of Aden therefore reveals several emerging dynamics of shifting security relations among the Great Powers today. Indeed, Somalia on its own intrinsic terms barely interests Tokyo. Trade and cultural bilateral ties are not significant although there is a strong humanitarian concern. Rather, Japan, as a major maritime trading nation, has crucial national security interests in protecting its shipping routes traversing the Gulf of Aden. The lack of a functioning government in Somalia threatens such routes as pirates pounce on passing ships. Such national interests have also been defined on broader terms, as Japan’s responsibility to help maintain global stability and security through such major sea lines of communication as the Gulf of Aden. Furthermore, combating piracy on the high seas has far more international legality and legitimacy than previous Japanese deployments to Iraq for instance. This sense of “responsibility” became ever more pressing as Tokyo scrambled to deploy warships in the wake of China’s earlier decision to deploy. Overcoming legislative and constitutional constraints, Japanese deployments to the Gulf of Aden have set several note-worthy precedents in Tokyo’s ongoing evolution as a global security actor. In legal terms, the new Anti-Piracy Measures Law has no time or geographical constraints. In theory, Tokyo can in future deploy its forces on counterpiracy patrols anywhere in the world for an unlimited time period, although thus far the Cabinet has been careful to set annual timelines for deployments to the Gulf of Aden that require renewal. In operational terms, Japan now has its first overseas base since World War II in Djibouti to support its deployments in the region. Japanese warships and maritime patrol aircraft have also gained valuable experience operating on blue-water assignments far away from home ports, cooperating with other international navies.

Leaving the day-to-day routines of antipiracy patrols aside, the multinational naval force could also have more far-reaching implications at a regional and

global level, depending on the extent to which cooperative or competitive dynamics are generated with so many warships from the Asian Great Powers operating in the same waters. China, India, and Japan all certainly have much to gain strictly in terms of enhancing their national interests, whether it be gaining more naval expertise or practicing and demonstrating their military capability to protect sea lanes. And one also cannot deny the competitive dynamics that have arisen, such as Indian submarines reportedly shadowing the Chinese task force or the Japanese scramble to deploy after China. But competition need not come at the cost of cooperation. "I don't think it necessarily has to be one (rivalry) or the other (cooperation)," observed Naval War College's Nikolas Gvosdev. "It can be both."⁴² This is not just because an operational need exists for coordinated patrols and confidence-building measures and communication among the various navies, not least through the SHADE mechanism. More significantly for the international community, Somali piracy is now seen and accepted as a global security challenge that all the major states have clearly shared an interest in combating, and they have deployed resources to do so. Japan thus has an opportunity to lead and build a regional multilateral mechanism dedicated to combating piracy, like the information-sharing and capacity-building one that Japan helped develop for the Malacca Straits. Indeed, some have argued that Japan had previously succeeded in influencing China to accept norms of maritime cooperative security, including joining the ReCAAP.⁴³ Tokyo extended an ad-hoc contribution of US\$ 560,000 to the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) in 2012 for the purpose of sharing experience on antipiracy measures in Asia with neighboring states around Somalia.⁴⁴ If Tokyo proves similarly successful at leading in resolving the Somali piracy problem, it may well go quite some way to assuming the new role of "world trouble-shooter" that some Japanese government ministries are calling for.⁴⁵ Indeed, the piracy problem could prove to be one of several global challenges that Japan could help resolve, ranging from climate change to combating infectious diseases.

Notes

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9

Opposing interests? The geopolitics of the Horn of Africa¹

Stig Jarle Hansen

Introducing the geopolitics of the Horn

This chapter argues that the influences of neighboring states, and their rivalries, continue to impact the politics of Somalia and the rest of the Horn. Indeed, in the Horn of Africa, policies are often seen as determined by geography, despite ethnic loyalties that transcend borders. This chapter acknowledges that concepts such as state interests provide valuable insights into regional dynamics, but also illustrates that the solutions to security issues may vary and change with the personalities that also influence relations between countries in the Horn. Relationships between states might be redefined, as old enmities are transcended. Somalia does not exist in a vacuum, rather, the Somali conflict interacts with the policies and rivalries of the neighboring countries. Some of these rivalries have little to do with Somalia; some are influenced by historical narratives and legacies, border issues, natural resources, and the need for markets and prestige.

Geopolitical analysts such as Karl Haushofer defined geopolitics as the “doctrine on the spatial determinism of all political processes, based on the broad foundations of geography.”² Haushofer’s variables, seen to determine state behavior, have appeared in some form or another in many analyses of the Horn. Variables such as access to sea (Ethiopia), regional rivalries, natural resources, and traits have been discussed. This form of thinking is important in the Horn of Africa as it, wrongly or rightly, informs popular perceptions of

the political dynamics at the Horn, and also influences local political action.³ In a typical geopolitical analysis, geographical hindrances that give the state protection or economic advantages will be important, as will the strategic location of a country, namely where the country is situated and thus which rivals it will face close to its borders, its strategic importance, and which strategic communication channels it will have access to. In the case of the Horn, its strategic importance should be undisputed as the coastal Horn countries Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti are located at two maritime "super-highways." The first super-highway consists of the shipping lanes going through the Bab El Mandeb straits, where oil is shipped to the West from the Middle East, and goods from Asia and Oceania are shipped to Europe. More than 20,000 ships pass through these straits every year.⁴ The second maritime highway runs between Africa and the Middle East, where arms, drugs, refugees, furniture, spices, money, workers, and many other goods are trafficked between the regions. As illustrated later, this has a direct impact on regional political dynamics.⁵

Natural resources, or lack of resources, are often seen as a major driver of foreign policy among geopolitical analysts. The policy imperatives created by a state's need for resources have come in many forms in geopolitically based analyses; the state's quest for oil and water are examples of re-occurring themes.⁶ In the Horn, oil and water are important, not only for its direct value, but also for the rumors (not always well-founded) that are created by indications of oil. These narratives created by rumors also influence public policies.

It is easy to see the regional political dynamism at the Horn as a product of states and their national interests, including maximizing access to resources, as oil, trade, and water. However, to apply too much state-centrism when analyzing regional dynamics in the Horn should be avoided. The interaction at the Horn is also influenced by tribal and clan politics. Admittedly, each state has its own interests regarding borders, resources, economy, and prestige, but there are also clan or tribal subgroups that transcend these borders, as well as important subgroups operating within the various states. Some entities inside Somalia, such as Somaliland in the northwest of Somalia, and Puntland in the northeast of Somalia, are for example not recognized as states; indeed Puntland does not even want such recognition, but these entities have nevertheless a quite independent role when dealing with other states in the region.

There are historical patterns of migration that transcend borders, and clans or tribes in one country will often enjoy the support of, or be influenced by, political standing in other countries, creating a special political dynamism that is highly important in today's Somalia, as it is indeed in the whole of the Horn of Africa.⁷

Without subscribing to geographical foundationalism, the mere geographical location and configuration of the Horn gives certain predispositions to regional dynamics. Ethiopia and the interior of Kenya are less exposed to the Middle Eastern countries than the areas on the coast, such as Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, and coastal Kenya. The Middle East is close to Somalia, and one of its “financial capitals” is Dubai, where a strong Somali business community is located. It should not be forgotten that Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt and Yemen have played, and still play, important roles in the Horn of Africa. Similarly, Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Eritrea have all interfered directly in Somali politics.⁸ The backdrop of these interventions is created by a historical legacy, where patterns that in some cases are more than a thousand years old are repeated. One example is the pattern of rivalry and distrust between the central interior of the Horn, the historical Abyssinia, and the coastal zones, the latter open to foreign impulses, both through colonialism and its contacts with the Middle East. In this sense, a book chapter exploring regional dynamics first has to accept that some of Somalia’s neighbors are Middle Eastern, and the country’s geographical position is at the intersection between the Arab world and Africa. Second, historical narratives influence today’s local perception of the conflict, and the region has a rich precolonial past; it was never just a “black hole” that was filled when the Western colonial powers entered the Horn in the late nineteenth century. It has to explore the current national interests of regional actors, but it also has to accept that regional actors are not only states, and that state as well as ethnical or clan-based interests can change over time.

This is the point of departure for this chapter, which starts by exploring the historical events and narratives that influence present day Somalia.

The course of history? The Horn, on the periphery of Africa, and the Middle East

The Horn of Africa has been the site of historically (very) important state formations running more than 2,000 years back in time; first in the north but later also along the Somali and Eritrean coasts. Patterns that were set in the Middle Ages are repeated today and one of these patterns is the struggle between coastal states and interior elites, today in the form of Ethiopia and the ruling elite of Kenya, in the past in the form of the predecessor of Ethiopia, the Abyssinian empire in its various forms, the Axumite empire (100–940 AD), the Zagwe empire (1137–1270), and the Solomonic dynasty (1270–1974), with various interregnums in between.⁹ All of these dynasties

were attacked from the coastal zones of the horn of Africa. The Aksumites also attacked the present-day Middle East.¹⁰ The expansion of Islam changed this and pushed the Aksumites onto the defensive. The previously peripheral coastal zone of the Horn changed, and became Islamized as groups such as the Somalis and the Afars converted to Islam, a religion alien to the various Abyssinian empires, and as organizational skills and models were transferred to the region, various Islamic states started to appear. Later Islamic states on the coast or in the Middle East made inroads into the various Abyssinian empires. Historical memories of the struggle between the Abyssinians and the Somalis and other coastal groups have created narratives that are important today, and several of the “national heroes,” idols invoked to stir up emotions in current-day conflicts, are drawn from tales of these conflicts. Perhaps the most important of these is Ahmed Gran, Gurey in Somali, or Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ghāzī, as is his given name. Al-Ghāzī’s action illustrated the conflicts between the central highlands and the coasts, leading an invading army which almost crushed the Abyssinian empire in 1531–43, but that in the end was defeated by the Abyssinians, the latter with Portuguese aid.¹¹ Over time the Abyssinians faced threats from the coast, and further south the inland population outside Abyssinia, present day Kenya, faced the onslaught of Muslim slave traders and Middle-Eastern empires such as the Ottomans and the Omanis. By the nineteenth century, however, Abyssinia had reemerged as an offensive power, and under Menelik II (1844–1913), known in Ethiopia under his nickname “the great,” Somali/Muslim lands were partly conquered, and partly ceded in a treaty with the Abyssinians. The campaigns against the locals were highly brutal and the history of the period remains alive in these areas, providing a basis for Somali nationalist narratives and accounting for the foundation of some clans, especially the Somali Ogadeen clans in hostility against Ethiopia, which was to last through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first.¹² The emergence of the European powers, which often colonized the Muslim coast, hindered further Abyssinian expansion, and created a new threat to Abyssinia/Ethiopia from the coast.

The coastal-interior division was to maintain itself into the twentieth century. First during the 1930s, when Italy used Somali and Italian colonial troops in the invasion of Ethiopia, but also later when an independent Somalia emerged, and when Eritrean Muslims initiated the resistance against the Ethiopian empire, although this conflict was later secularized.¹³ In the case of Somalia, the new state, established as a union between the former Italian colony and the British colony, publicly claimed that all Somali minorities should be included in the new state. Most of Somalia’s neighbors had such Somali minorities. For example, this was a direct challenge to Ethiopia, as its Haud region, also known as Ogadeen (previously conquered by Menelik), had a

clear Somali majority. A claim to unify all Somali-inhabited lands was a claim on territories that Ethiopia, and almost every other state, defined as Ethiopian territory.

Admittedly the Haud had a very weak Ethiopian presence, and Ethiopia also displayed a lack of interest in state-building in the region, but Ethiopia did not want to give away territories it regarded as its own. This meant that Ethiopia and Somalia emerged as hostile states from the day of Somalia's independence, since Somalia wanted the region as an integral part of the new state. However, it also meant that Ethiopia could find other allies in the Horn, as British colonial expansion had left Somalis under the control of the protectorate of British East Africa (1895–1920), the British Colony of Kenya (1920–63), and the resulting independent Kenya.¹⁴

Indeed, Kenya had border clashes with Somalia, starting even before its independence. In the so-called Shifta war of 1963–67, Kenya fought Somali irredentists supported by the Somali state.¹⁵ The Somali–Kenyan tension resulted in Africa's oldest defense pact between two African countries, the Kenyan–Ethiopian pact of 1964 which, although the wording remains secret, has become a cornerstone of both countries' foreign policies. These two countries' foreign policies toward regional enemies became coordinated to the extent that Kenya diplomatically supported Ethiopia in the 1977–78 Ogadeen war over the control of the Somali inhabited Haud areas of Ethiopia, despite Ethiopia being an ally of the Soviet Union, while Kenya officially was regarded as an ally of the West.¹⁶ Somalia remained allied with the Arab powers in this conflict, in one sense reenacting the old coastal-interior conflict pattern in the Horn of Africa, a pattern aided by the fact that the Eritrean insurgency movements sided with Somalia.¹⁷

Water issues and Middle Eastern politics were also to influence the politics of the Horn of Africa. Egypt has historically played a role as a supporter of the coastal states, first as a part of the Ottoman Empire, later as an actor in its own right. Egypt's role in the Horn of Africa has been influenced by its traditional rivalry with the Abyssinian Empire, later the Ethiopian state—a rivalry also influenced by water politics, as the Blue Nile, the origin of 85 percent of the water in the Nile that passes through Egypt, originates in Ethiopia.¹⁸ Egypt has traditionally backed Ethiopia's enemies in the area, and was a steady-and-stable ally of the Somali republic and the subsequent military dictatorship. Egypt's involvement in the Horn also contributed to an Israeli involvement, as the Israelis saw Ethiopia as an important ally in their various confrontations with Egypt.¹⁹ Even after the outbreak of the Somali civil war, Egypt played a role inside Somalia. During the United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM) in the 1990s, the secretary general of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros Ghali, was met with considerable hostility by both the Ethiopian and

the Somali rebels that had fought the military dictatorship, because of his involvement in aiding former Somali military dictator Siad Barre, who was seen as an ally against Ethiopia. There was also rivalry between Egypt and Ethiopia inside Somalia in the late 1990s, with each seemingly sabotaging the other's peace plans and peace attempts.²⁰ Egypt of course had its allies along the coast again playing out the coast versus the interior conflict.

The historical context thus introduced at least two cleavages in the policies of the Horn of Africa: the tension between the coast, represented by Eritrea, Somalia, and coastal Kenya, and the inland, represented by Ethiopia and the Kenyan ruling elite; and the water issue over the Nile, pitting Ethiopia against Egypt. To a certain extent these cleavages were overlapping.

The center versus the coast in the Somali civil war

Somali Islamism, itself a product of Somalia's cultural proximity to the Middle East, led by Islamic scholars educated in Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia, presented a challenge to Ethiopia. Radical organizations such as Al-Ittihad Al-Islami clearly had a presence in the Somali inhabited parts of Ethiopia, and maintained an idea of uniting Muslims in the Horn. Nevertheless, the practical recruitment patterns of these organizations were far from ideas of Muslim unity, largely recruiting Somalis only. In this sense Somali Islamists presented the Ethiopians with a renewed challenge of Pan-Somalism; it was a Somali movement transcending the borders of the Horn, with an aim of unifying Muslim Somalis. Moreover, these Islamists also conducted terror attacks inside Ethiopia. In 1996, there was an assassination attempt on the then-Ethiopian Minister of transport, Abdulmejiid Hussein, and three hotel bombings took place, two of them in the capital, Addis Ababa.²¹ The Ittihad organization claimed responsibility for the attacks, and the presence of the organizations training base prompted several attacks into Somalia.²² In many ways, Al Ittihad echoed the old Somali state's object of unifying Somalis, and it should be noted also that Al Shabaab's present-day rhetoric of unifying the Muslim ummah, has a Pan-Somali side, as a unified ummah in the region could very well be dominated geographically by Somali inhabited territories.

The coast versus interior cleavage was also to become well and alive in Eritrean–Ethiopian relations, and this was to have ramifications for Somalia. Admittedly in 1991, the first issue seemed remote, as the Derg regime in Ethiopia was ousted from power by the Ethiopian People's Democratic Front (EPRDF), a rebel movement that had a longstanding alliance with the dominating

Eritrean Insurgency Movement, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). EPRDF also supported Eritrean independence, which subsequently was achieved in 1992. The EPLF in turn drew support from the highland groups of Eritrea, mostly ethnic groups who were Christians with cultural connections to Ethiopia. The EPLF was an organization that had out-manuevered the more Muslim-dominated Eritrean rebel organization, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF). This winning alliance in Ethiopia had also previously enjoyed the support of the Somali government. However, in 1998, the historical coastal-internal tension of the Horn was revitalized as the old allies in the TPLF and EPRDF became enemies, and when the Eritrean-Ethiopian war (1998-2000) broke out.²³ After an Eritrean defeat in 2000, Eritrea and Ethiopia nevertheless continued their cold war. Eritrea saw Somalia as a second front where Eritrea could use local factions to hurt Ethiopia.²⁴ Eritrea and Ittihad fought together and a strategic relationship based on mutual enemies and interests, rather than similar ideology, was created. In a sense the situation of the 1977 Ogadeen war was repeated with Eritrea and Somali militants again fighting against Ethiopia; the coastal zone attacked the Abyssinians again.²⁵

Ethiopia, attempting to block Eritrean activities in Somalia, and rightly seeing Eritrea as having Islamist connections, chose its allies in Somalia according to the maxim, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." It developed a good relationship with Somali actors with anti-Al Ittihad credentials, such as the leaders of the self-governed region of Puntland, based on the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) that fought Ittihad in the early 1990s. It also allied with the Rahanwhein Resistance Army (RRA), that fought the Hawiye Haber Gedir factions in the late 1990s, that were also believed to be allies of Eritrea. Fear of Islamists could also have driven Ethiopia to resist the Arta peace process, where the peaceful Somali Muslim brotherhood, Al Islah, played a role. Ethiopia also attempted to take advantage of the World Trade Centre Attack in 2001, by designating traditional enemies in Somalia as Al-Qaeda affiliates, in a hope of gaining US support.

The importance of the Ethiopian–Kenyan axis was reinvoked in the so-called Mbagati-Eldoret process starting in 2002, the peace process that resulted in the new Somali transitional national government, the TNG.²⁶ These negotiations were hosted by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).²⁷ The organization was perceived by many Somalis as being dominated by the Kenyan–Ethiopian axis, especially during the negotiations.²⁸ The subsequent presidential, prime-ministerial, and parliamentary selection processes resulted in the selection of a staunch Ethiopian ally, former Puntland President Abdullahi Yusuf, as the Somali president, and another Ethiopia-friendly ally as the prime minister of Somalia and as the speaker of parliament. This selection alienated the local clans in Mogadishu.

In one sense, Ethiopian domination of the Transitional Federal Government provided legitimacy to the Islamists. By 2004–05, a new alliance was emerging inside Mogadishu, consisting of Islamists and clan leaders who were resisting what they saw as a broad alliance between Ethiopia and their local allies. Nationalism was invoked, so was religious animosity, and this broad alliance was supported by Eritrea. Through 2005 to 2006, this group, parts of it led by Islamists, but also containing notable elements of the Somali business community, gained ground in Mogadishu. The alliance that later was to be known as the Sharia Courts Union, or the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), was seen as an antidote against warlordism and crime, but also against Ethiopian influence. ICU was a heterogeneous movement, but the fact that it contained Islamists previously admitting to have been involved in terror attacks inside Ethiopia as well as Eritrean supported elements, as well as the aggressiveness of the most radical elements of the courts, the Harakat Al Shabaab, was a combination that provoked the Ethiopians to intervene decisively in support of their local allies. By December 2006, Ethiopia had intervened with 20,000 men and taken control over most of southern Somalia, together with their allies among the warlords and the Somali transitional federal government.²⁹ Historical narratives contributed to a consequent mobilization against Ethiopia, as rumors were circulating of an Ethiopian agenda aimed at dividing Somalia (or at least keeping it weak), so as to avoid a recurrence of the historical pattern of attacks from the coastal zone of the Horn.

The whole of Somalia was not against the Ethiopian intervention. Clans supporting the Transitional Federal government, such as the Majerteens of Puntland, and the Rahanwehins of Bay-Bakol supported the Ethiopian intervention, and Somaliland's dominating clans, the Isaqs and the Gadabursis seemed rather indifferent. However, the old historical narratives, including those of a clash of civilizations between Muslims in the Horn and the Christian Ethiopia, were used to whip up anti-Ethiopian sentiment in central Somalia.³⁰ In the end, Ethiopia scaled down its intervention. The Djibouti peace agreement in 2008, an agreement between the TFG and elements of the courts that resulted in a new government in Somalia led by the old head of the Sharia courts, influenced the withdrawal process. The Ethiopian withdrawal led to a drastic expansion of the Radical Harakat Al Shabaab group, an expansion only stalled by the other regional powers.

The AMISOM intervention in Somalia and the dynamics driving it

Parallel to the deployment of the Ethiopian soldiers, just 3 months after the Ethiopian defeat of the Sharia courts, the forces of the African Union, at first

only from Uganda, started to arrive in Somalia. Not impressive from the start, the AMISOM forces were nevertheless the first forces to defeat Al Shabaab in strategic battles since the Ethiopian withdrawal, with the serious defeat of Harakat Al Shabaab during the Ramadan offensive in 2010. The organization was not entirely neutral in its deployment; the mission itself had its roots in an IGAD-planned mission, the so-called IGADSOM force. However, the IGAD states, especially Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti, were deemed to be too close to events inside Somalia with their own vested interests, and this was one of the reasons why the mission was changed to an African Union one.³¹ The irony was that Kenya and Djibouti were to play a crucial role in the mission after 2012, and that Ethiopia was to re-intervene in support of the African Union's Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The operation itself was launched with the blessing of the African Union's Peace and Security Council on 19 January 2007 and on 20 February 2007 the UN Security Council approved it. It did, however, take time before forces were forthcoming. The first deployment was a small, but symbolically important, contribution from Uganda, deploying some 1,600 soldiers in March 2007.³² Uganda has since provided the major contingent of the African Union forces, with Burundi as a close second. Uganda and Burundi were also to support the Ethiopian-backed transitional government under the mandate of the AMISOM force, which included protecting government institutions and strategic points in Mogadishu such as its port and the airport.³³ Thus AMISOM, albeit at the start keeping to their static defense positions and claiming to be neutral, became a part of the *de facto* anti-Shabaab alliance.

Despite this, the initially deploying states were perceived to have fewer interests in Somalia than Ethiopia and Kenya. Uganda, for example, was by many perceived to be more neutral in relation to domestic Somali politics, and although this in large measure was correct, it was to change. Initially, Uganda's army commanders themselves stated that regional stability was a vital component in the Ugandan rationale for deploying troops to Somalia, claiming that "Somalia is unstable, Kenya is unstable. And if Kenya is unstable, then we are unstable, first and foremost." A sort of Ugandan version of the domino theory.³⁴ There might have been other causes for the deployment as well; the United States was pushing for the AMISOM deployment, and good relations and possible military support from the West might have been one factor behind this. It is also very attractive for Ugandan officers (and privates) to go to Somalia due to the pay increases. According to the BBC, "The lowest paid Ugandan soldiers earn around \$120 (£76) per month; if they opt to fight in Somalia they earn more than \$1,000."³⁵ Ugandan observers suggest that the Ugandan deployment thus is used both to please disgruntled officers, and to keep the officers busy from plotting against the regime.³⁶ However, prestige is also a potential driver in foreign policy and might indeed be one

of the reasons behind the Ugandan intervention. Prestige is often tied with pride. In 2010, Al Shabaab launched terrorist attacks in Kampala, intending to do a “Madrid”-style bombing attempting to prompt Uganda to withdraw from Somalia. This move failed, and although possibly swaying the weak Uganda opposition, it entrenched Uganda’s will to stay present in Somalia even more.³⁷ Uganda stepped up its presence in the country despite the fact that Uganda’s Christian majority was used by Al Shabaab in their propaganda targeting Uganda’s soldiers.³⁸ Uganda has used its role in Somalia to attempt to influence both world opinion and the international powers on issues that were closer to the country. It threatened to withdraw from Somalia as a consequence of allegations by the United Nations that it was backing the m23 rebels in southern Somalia.³⁹ However, it seems that the Ugandan deployment has driven the Ugandans closer to Kenya and Ethiopia, especially when the Kenyan intervention force was incorporated into the AMISOM forces, and Kenya was awarded one of the deputy commands of AMISOM.

The contribution of the second major partner in AMISOM, Burundi, should not be underestimated. Its numerical contribution to AMISOM was sizable, and its forces provided a stable backbone for the force, presenting the component of AMISOM that perhaps had the most neutral reputation inside Somalia, and provided notable analysts, such as the brilliant Frederic Ngoga Gateretse, to the political office of AMISOM. The Burundian contingent did, however, have serious problems with the payment of wages. At times Burundian soldiers would go without wages for several months, hurting the morale of the forces and creating openings for corruption. Burundi remained committed despite losing AMISOM’s second-in-command, General Juvenal Niyoyunguruza, in a suicide-attack in 2009.

The finest hour of the original Uganda- and Burundi-based AMISOM force was under the so-called Ramadan offensive in 2010 in Mogadishu, where Al Shabaab attacked and failed to dislodge forces from the African Union (Somali forces were also allied with the latter but had little combat value). Al Shabaab failed to maintain the momentum of its offensives, and by 2012 renewed Ethiopian and Kenyan interventions and an increased force of other African Union countries drove Al Shabaab back from controlling large parts of southern Somalia to, at the time of writing, only controlling one city of importance, that is, the city of Brawa. While the original forces of the African Union were the most important in stopping the last large-scale Al Shabaab offensive in Somalia, it was the Kenyan and Ethiopian advances into Somalia in 2012 that conquered most territories from Al Shabaab. Another regional actor, Djibouti, also sent forces into Somalia. However, the most potent counterweight against Ethiopian–Kenyan influence in Somalia, Eritrea, had a weakening influence inside Somalia; it was losing allies.

A new game?

As earlier indicated, Kenya and Ethiopia enjoyed an intimate strategic relationship, and had, since the Kenyan independence, been able to coordinate their regional policies. However, they also had separate agendas: Kenya's interests diverged from the Ethiopians, in that it had developed a close relationship with one of the Somali clans, the Ogadeen clan, despite its enmity—inhabiting the previously mentioned Ethiopian controlled Haud province that had been annexed by Menelik the great—and it being the provider of the majority of the recruits to the various Ethiopian insurgent groups recruiting amongst Somalis.

The close relationship between Kenya and Ethiopia's traditional enemies, the Ogadeen clan of the Darod clan confederacy, can, at least according to a popular Ogadeeni narrative, itself be traced back to incidents typical of the Horn of Africa's politics: tribal politics encouraging rulers to put tribal (or clan) allies they trusted into the police, the security services, and the armed forces. According to researcher Mohamed Hussein Gaas, the special relationship can be traced back to Hezekiah Rabala Ochukas' military coup against Daniel Arap Moi in 1982.⁴⁰ The coup was staged from the base of the Kenyan Air Force in Mbagathi and drew on recruits mainly from the Kenyan Kikuyu and Luo tribes. The forces that defeated the rebellion and saved Moi's presidency on the night of the coup were led by four officers.⁴¹ One of these, General Mahmoud Mohamed, an Ogadeeni-Somali, impressed his officer peers, and was by far the most active of them. His star, and the star of his clan's men, rose in the system. In a typical Horn of Africa ethnic purge, President Moi chose to empower new officers and soldiers from the ethnic communities that had saved him, while removing officers from the Kikuyu and Luo tribes, questioning their loyalty as they were overrepresented among the individuals staging the coup. These officers were replaced by officers from the Kalenjin tribe, but also Somalis from the Ogadeen clan of General Mahmoud, creating a close relationship between the Ogadeen and the Kenyan security apparatus as exemplified by the present-day Minister of Defence, Mohamed Yusuf Haji. The story in it-self is hard to verify, but might be true, it did, however, circulate widely and drew many Ogadeenis toward the Kenyan government.

At the time of writing, the Kenyan Minister of Defence is from the same clan, as are several leading security and police officers, a fact highlighted by International Crisis Group in their paper describing the Kenyan intervention initiated in October 2011.⁴² Many Somalis still see the Kenyan intervention as an Ogadeen plot to gain power, and the current push by the Ogadeen to establish a self-governed entity, the Juba Valley State, in the southern part of Somalia arouses suspicion that the Kenyan intervention is an Ogadeen plot, an

Ogadeen manipulation of the Kenyan armed forces.⁴³ It does indeed seem that Kenya has operated with a plan to create some sort of Ogadeen-based *cordon sanitaire* inside Somalia, vaguely resembling the part of the British Colony of Kenya ceded to Italian Somaliland in 1924. According to the International Crisis Group, such plans existed at least 2 years before the Kenyan intervention, which creates suspicion of a Kenyan interest in creating a sphere of influence in parts of Somalia that previously were a part of Colonial Kenya.⁴⁴ The Kenyan intervention could thus be seen as either an Ogadeen plot or an attempt by Kenya to establish control over formerly affiliated territory.

Given the importance of such argument in Somalia, this might explain the Somali Government's initial hesitation to condone the Kenyan intervention, as circles from the Hawiye clan federation in Mogadishu feared a strengthening of their Ogadeen rivals.⁴⁵ This is, however, a drastic oversimplification, and shows a lack of understanding of Kenyan regional interests, and last but not least a terrible underestimation of the power of the non-Ogadeen involved in the decision to intervene. Although the decision was taken by a small group of people, some of the Kenyan decision makers involved, such as President Kibaki and the late Georges Saitoti, were definitive strongmen in Kenyan politics, and not easily open to manipulation. A *cordon sanitaire* policy could, however, have been planned as a safety measure protecting Kenyan strategic economic interests.

The primary strategic economic interest of Kenya is the tourist industry, its largest foreign earnings source.⁴⁶ A creation of a *cordon sanitaire* could have been a step to protect this industry as both kidnappings and terrorist attacks have damaged tourism in the past. It should be remembered that Kenya acted against Somalia only after three different cases of kidnapping, and the fear of the loss of the Kenyan tourist industry is key to this interpretation. As highlighted by the International Crisis Group, the refugee crisis created by the Somali conflict inside Kenya, and the fact that the refugees from Somalia destabilized the Kenyan ethnic balance, might have worked as additional reasons.⁴⁷ A third issue often discussed in relation to the Kenyan intervention was Kenya's long-term plans for the city of Lamu, relatively close to the Somali-Kenyan border. Kenya planned to build a multi-billion-dollar port to serve the East-African market, creating the Lamu Port and Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET), covering South Sudan and Ethiopia.⁴⁸ In this sense there are several reasons why Kenya wanted protection through a security zone controlled by Somali allies.

Kenya has several border issues with Somalia that have not been solved, but it is unlikely that these issues prompted the intervention, since they have been dormant for some time. However, they have influenced the narrativization of the Kenyan intervention inside Somalia, contributing to creating hostility

toward Kenya. Perhaps the most important border issue concerns oil-and-gas exploration. The maritime border of Kenya and Somalia was never properly demarcated. Kenya suggests that it follows latitude lines, straight from where the shore meets the land border, then running directly eastwards. The Somali claim follows the border on shore running into the ocean in a southeastern direction. The disagreement leaves a triangle of disputed sea territory, a triangle that probably holds oil. In 2012 Kenya chose to sell concessions for the Oil and Gas exploration rights in these areas.⁴⁹ The move was very unpopular in Somalia, but the Somali factions were unable to threaten Kenya, East Africa's strongest naval power. It was nevertheless seen as highly suspicious that the move came after the Kenyan intervention, and created anti-Kenyan feelings. Oil also aided the suspicions against the Kenyan and the Ogadeen intentions in southern Somalia, as the Juba Valley and Gedo provinces are expected to hold considerable oil deposits, and an Ogadeen-controlled Juba Valley state could extract oil without giving income to the central Somali government. Although the presence of oil has not yet been confirmed, and that Kenyan hostile intent is a mere rumor, it remains a narrative that has influence on Somali politics, again contributing to a cleavage between Mogadishu and the Ogadeen-based factions of Aden Madobe and Mohamed Abdi Xaji-Mohamed "Gandhi."

The close links between the Kenyan intervention and the Ogadeen clan might have been a factor that made Ethiopians reluctant to support their Kenyan allies' entrance into Somalia with military means. According to the International Crisis Group, Kenya actively attempted to get Ethiopia to intervene militarily alongside them, but initially failed.⁵⁰

However, this was just an interim setback. Ethiopia's armed forces later became highly important for the victories over Al Shabaab in 2012. What was most surprising was that Ethiopia grew closer to Kenya's allies, its old enemies in the Ogadeen clan. Ethiopia was seen as an oppressor of the Ogadeens in the Haud area, whom the Ogadeens fought as members of the Ethiopian-based Ogadeen National Liberation Front (ONLF), and before that the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF).⁵¹ Perhaps thanks to influence from their Kenyan allies, perhaps due to the fact that they knew Ogadeen leader Aden Madobe from his stay in an Ethiopian prison, perhaps due to the fact that Aden Madobes, Ras Kamboni group was one of the most militarily efficient groups in Somalia, Ethiopia ended up supporting the Ogadeen armed militias, and in some cases supported Ogadeen in their political rivalry with Mogadishu.⁵²

Ethiopia also reluctantly aided the Kenyan intervention by reentering Somalia by force in 2012, providing one of the most efficient military forces in the military struggle against Al Shabaab, conquering large cities such as

the former interim capital, Baidoa, the provincial capitals of Xuduur and Beled Weyne. The Ethiopians were highly efficient, providing feint movements and being mobile, keeping Al Shabaab unsecure on how to deploy their reserves.

Another regional state also entered militarily into Somalia. Djibouti was perhaps the neighbor with the smallest stake in Somalia. Although it in theory had been a part of a Pan-Somali quest, since it contained a large Somali population, the fact that it had been decolonized quite late, achieving independence from France as late as in 1977, probably spared it from the sort of conflicts Kenya and Ethiopia had with Somalia. Moreover, for the first decade after its independence, Djibouti was politically dominated by Somalis from the Issa clan.⁵³ Djibouti at times had a strained relationship with the self-declared independent enclave Somaliland; the two had closed their borders in April, and had disagreements over Djibouti's sponsoring of the 2000 Arta peace process.⁵⁴

Eritrea was again on the losing side in Somalia. Its regional enemies and rivals, Kenya, Ethiopia—and to a lesser extent—Djibouti, had sizable military contingents in the country, and the previously neutral Uganda slowly turned more negative toward Eritrea. Eritrea was also suffering on the ground. First, the Eritrean relationship with Harakat Al Shabaab, the most important enemy of the international coalition, always had been problematic. In 2007 Al Shabaab had even called for regime change in Eritrea, and criticized Eritrea for being against Islam.⁵⁵ By 2009/2010, the relationship had further soured. During a hostage-crisis where Al Shabaab had taken a French hostage, Al Shabaab clearly rejected Eritrean pressures to release the hostage, showing Eritrean impotence in the face of their supposed ally. The most trusted ally of Eritrea, Islamist Hassan Dahir Aweys, grew weaker and weaker and had to disband his own organization and join Al Shabaab to survive, and within Al Shabaab he gained only a peripheral position. Eritrea seemingly had lost its regional proxy war in Somalia. Al Shabaab was in decline. Most importantly, old enmity was transcended, while the old alliance between Kenya and Ethiopia worked, and to a certain degree faced the forces from the coastal periphery of the Horn, the Ogadeenis had been drawn closer to Ethiopia.

The role of Yemen

Not all important powers in Somalia have a military presence in the country, and not all of Somalia's neighbors are African states. Yemen has been influenced by Somalia and has influenced Somalia in return for the duration of the whole Somali civil war. The Yemeni arms market, and the lack of ability, or will, of the Yemeni government, to control it, has provided small arms that have fueled the Somali

civil war throughout its duration. According to a report written by the United Nations Arms Embargo Commission, Yemen is the largest supplier of arms to Somalia.⁵⁶ Attempts to curtail the arms trade by international powers have not succeeded, and several arms dealers in Yemen have prominent positions in the society. Yemeni arms dealer Fares Mana'a was, for example, promoted to governor by the northern Houti fraction after the United States put his name on the asset freeze lists over individuals engaged with criminal activities.⁵⁷

Yemeni society is heavily armed and a gun culture creates social acceptance for an arms trade that also contributes to legitimizing arms smuggling, although smuggling to Somalia is defined as illegal. A major problem is also the corruption within the Yemeni army and the police. Low wages in the army, combined with high profits in the arms market, ensure that arms smuggling goes on and that the arms sometimes are from the Yemeni army's own stocks, sometimes stolen by its own officers. The large number of perfectly legal small arms dealers also creates a problem of implementation, and the existence of large arms markets, as Souq al-Talh and Suq Juhainah in the Sana'a province, makes arms sales even more easy.

Yemeni export of arms has been directly felt also by Somalia's neighbors. Al-Qaeda, for example, used Yemeni weapons in their 2002 attack on the Arakia airline passenger plane in Kenya.⁵⁸ The availability of arms coming from Yemen means that any actor in Somalia can easily arm a group, thus fuelling the Somali conflict. However, Yemen also loses out. In one sense the civil war in Somalia also contributes to destabilizing Yemen: the high profits from arms exports to Somalia contribute to increasing the corruption of Yemeni officials, tempted by these profits. Somalia has other malign effects in Yemen as well. For example, the largest foreign contingent fighting to aid the Ansaar Al Sharia/Al-Qaeda when the latter gained control over large parts of the Abayan governate in Yemen in 2010–11 were Somalis.⁵⁹ Yemen is thus also directly hurt by the Somali conflict. Despite this, Yemen's will to engage directly in Somalia has proven very limited. Yemen was a keystone in Ethiopian attempts to isolate Eritrea from 1998 to 2008, and it joined various military agreements with Ethiopia, also supplying Ethiopia's allies within Somalia with arms, most notably the Puntland regime. But its interventions were limited, and the relationship with Puntland was also tense due to unlicensed Yemeni fishing in Somali coastal waters.⁶⁰ Somaliland had a troubled relationship with Yemen, stemming from Somaliland's support for South Yemeni independence in the Yemeni civil war of 1994, although this support amounted to little more than rhetoric since Somaliland at the time barely managed to keep order internally. However, Yemen's relationship with Somaliland was later made very difficult by Yemeni fishing close to the Somaliland coast without licenses, as in Puntland.⁶¹

The conflict with Yemen is perhaps not so important today, because Somalia is so weak, and there are so many other issues that are pressing inside Somalia. Nevertheless, it stores up an explosive issue for the future. The core of the problem is two-folded. The first is Yemen's interpretation of its agreement with Eritrea over the ownership of the Hanish Islands in 1998, where Yemen interprets the treaty as opening up for Yemeni fishing based on customary traditions inside Eritrea's economic zone. This has been disputed by Eritrea and international lawyers, and could be used to legitimize Yemeni fishing in Somali, Omani, and Djiboutian waters as well.⁶² The Yemeni interpretation of traditional fishing rights will not be accepted by either of these countries and has a large conflict potential.

The second factor is connected with the first factor, and has potential for maritime problems as well, namely that Somalia never declared a 200-nautical mile economic exclusion zone, and this has been used to promote claims that Somalia does not have an economic exclusion zone, and subsequently as an excuse for fishing close to Somalia. Although the legality of such an interpretation is debated, it is the legal interpretation of, among others, the United Kingdom.⁶³ The maritime problems between Yemen and Somalia lie in the future, but the conflict potential is clearly there. However, Yemeni influence in Somalia, through its arms sales sector is very real.

Conclusions and shifting paradigms

Today, Somalia is dominated by a loose concert of regional powers dominated by Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda. Eritrea has been the loser in Somalia, as have the radicals in Harakat Al Shabaab and Al-Qaeda.

The reluctant alliance between the Somali-based Ogadeen fractions and Ethiopia has perhaps been the largest surprise in the Horn. The question is, however, how stable this relationship will be in the future, and if it will be interpreted by many Somalis as yet another Ethiopian attempt to keep Somalia fragmented by supporting local clan-based entities.

The success of the Somali stabilization lies in simply keeping the current alliance together; Ethiopia, the Ogadeen, the Puntlanders, the Somalilanders, the Somali government, Kenya, Uganda, and Burundi all need to pull together against Al Shabaab, who hope that the regional alliance will alienate Somalis because of religious conflicts, and that in the end this alliance will pull out of Somalia. One key is simply the relationship between Kenya, Ethiopia and Ogadeen, and the Somali government. The historical skepticism toward the interior on behalf of the coastal zones of the Horn needs to be transcended.

There are positive signs on the horizon, namely because of two new actors that will not be explored in depth in this chapter: South Sudan and Qatar, as well as the changes in the Horn itself. The new state of South Sudan has a good relationship with both Eritrea and Ethiopia. South Sudan refused to accept the conflict that has defined the Horn, and Somali politics, for over 15 years, the Eritrean–Ethiopian cold war, and attempted to stage negotiations between the two.⁶⁴ At the same time, one of the extended Horn’s best peacemakers, Qatar, who aided the peace process in Yemen between the Houthis and the government and the Djiboutian Eritrean Peace deal, have reproached Ethiopia. The Qatari–Ethiopian relationship is improving, enhancing Qatari peace activities in the Horn.⁶⁵ The Qatari and South Sudan experiences might have been a sign of the times, as Eritrean president Isayas Afewerki over the last 2 years has strengthened the relationship with the neighboring countries, having a close relationship with Yemen, North and South Sudan, and improving Qatar’s relationship with Djibouti. The new Prime Minister of Ethiopia Hailemariam Deslaegn also signaled his willingness to visit Asmara to discuss peace on Al Jazeera during the winter of 2012.⁶⁶ We do not know the results of this process yet. It is less important in Somalia than it used to be since Eritrean influence has declined, but it will create trust for Ethiopia among Somalis, and it will be a factor in convincing Somalis that they face a more unified region in dealing with their problem.

However, it might be that old ghosts can also haunt the Horn of Africa. During August 2012, riots in Mombasa, based on the killing of a Sheikh, but also grievances on behalf of the Muslim coast against the Nairobi elite of Kenya, flared up.⁶⁷ Al Shabaab endorsed the riots, and having shown a clear development of its Kenyan organization, Al Shabaab can perhaps still harness the historical coast-interior tension in the Horn of Africa, but now in Kenya instead of Somalia.

Notes

- 1 I would like to thank The editors, Therese Arnesen, Gufu Oba and Kashif Khan for valuable comments on draft versions of this chapter.
- 2 Saul Bernard Cohen, *Geopolitics of the World System* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003). Originally, geopolitical thinking also focused on how geographical features formed the inhabitants of certain lands and how they influenced a “national character,” a point that remains important in both Somali oral tradition and in Ethiopian discussions. Moreover, a state was often seen as something organic, with a form of mythical bound between the state and its peoples. See for example Rudolf Kjellen, *Der Staat als Lebensform* (Leipzig: S. Hirtzel, 1917) this belief was strongly questioned

in the West after world war two, partly due to their similarities with national socialistic ideas. However, the basic assumptions of geopolitics survived in various forms around the world, in the United States basic assumptions of the influence of geography, and the assumption of states as the main unit within international relations, survived within the realism approach to international relations following some of the original ideas of geopolitics. However, the view that geographical considerations determines policies of unitary states in the west was perhaps most strongly felt in several of the policy advice making think tanks in the west, like for example the American based Stratfor "STRATFOR Global Intelligence Annual Forecast 2012, *"Stratfor Analysis*, 2012. This tradition is also strong, if not dominating, within Strategic studies in China, Russia, India and Pakistan, and has also been common in the study of the Horn of Africa.

- 3 For such ideas see for example Barre Burale, "The man who destroyed Somalia. . . . Meles Zenawi" Mareg News, unknown, <http://www.mareeg.com/fidsan.php?sid=14215&tirsan=3> (accessed 6 January 2013); or Richard Dowden, "Don't force statehood on Somalia" *African Arguments*, 20 October 2011, <http://www.africanarguments.org/2011/10/20/don%E2%80%99t-force-statehood-on-somalia-by-richard-dowden/> (accessed 6 January 2013).
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- 6 See for example Edith Penrose, "Oil and international relations." *British Journal of International Relations* 2:1 (1976); Michael Klare, *Resource Wars* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001); Michael Klare, "Global Petro-Politics: The Foreign Policy Implications of the Bush Administration's Energy Plan." *Current History* (2002): 99–104; Michael Klare, "For Oil and Empire? Rethinking War with Iraq." *Current History* (2003): 129–35; Michael Klare, *Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Dependency on Imported Petroleum* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004); Michael Klare, *Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet: The New Geopolitics of Energy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2008).
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present day Sanaa in Yemen set out on a punishing expedition against Mecca. This is listed the Qur'an, sura 105, Al-Fil.

- 11 Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia* (London: James Currey, 1991).
- 12 Zewde, *A History*, 113.
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- 18 Michael Kelley and Robert Johnson "STRATFOR: Egypt Is Prepared To Bomb All Of Ethiopia's Nile Dams" Business Insider 13 October 2012, <http://www.businessinsider.com/hacked-stratfor-emails-egypt-could-take-military-action-to-protect-its-stake-in-the-nile-2012-10#ixzz2GpVqhbUP> Email Sent! You have successfully emailed the post.
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- 30 Hansen, *Al Shabaab*.
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10

The European Union comprehensive intervention in Somalia: Turning ploughs into swords?

Maria-Luisa Sánchez-Barrueco

This chapter aims to present the diverse array of policy tools that have been implemented by the European Union (EU) in Somalia since 2008, with a view to ascertaining the actual goals behind each measure and whether the legal framework and implementation of each instrument allows for an efficient outcome on the ground. From a general standpoint, the biblical call to turn swords into ploughshares¹ offers a graphic division between the “swords” initiatives that put security concerns first against those “ploughs” initiatives that aim at building a long-lasting peace through state-building and civil society reconstruction. The “security first, development later” philosophy that shaped the European Security Strategy² has proven to be of little value in environments where a functioning state is missing, as is clearly shown in the case of Somalia. On the one hand, whether extended financial support throughout the various international conferences of the donors has brought about a proportionate alleviation of the insecurity situation remains unclear. On the other hand, with foreign military forces in Somalia having faced unfavorable hospitality from locals over recent years, strengthening civil society prior to any military build-up seems timelier than ever.

The heading of this chapter should not mislead the reader, in the sense that no categorical answer will be provided on whether ploughs or swords stand out in the European involvement in Somalia. The evolving combination

of policy instruments of complex and varying nature that are analyzed in this contribution call for a more nuanced approach, which unfolds around three sets of reflections.

Against the backdrop of the scholarly debate over the position of the EU in the international arena, we first expose the perceived contradiction between the EU's self-assigned role of a civilizing force in international relations and the prominence of EU security and high-level policy initiatives in Somalia. Notwithstanding the European mantra of a "comprehensive strategy" that combines both traditional security-type initiatives and coordinated effort aimed at addressing the root causes of piracy and terrorism, figures show that the bulk of EU funds is channelled toward restoring offshore and inland security. Somalia has become a privileged theater of operations for testing the performance of the EU Common Defense Policy. Recent times have witnessed the launching of three European military operations to this end, whose long-term impact and sustainability is assessed in this chapter: EUNAVFOR-Somalia or simply Atalanta Operation focuses on deterring piracy off the Somali coasts since December 2008; EU Training Mission (EUTM)-Somalia has been training prospective soldiers of the Somali government since January 2010; finally, EUCAP-Nestor has been assisting neighbor states in reinforcing their maritime capacities since July 2012. Yet in certain cases, the origin of the funds committed to security even raises concerns as to whether development funds can be diverted from their primary design of improving responsiveness to humanitarian crises and accelerating partner development in order to cover military expenses, without a prior and in-depth debate at the level of European institutions.

The second trend stems from the complexities of the EU as an international organization in a permanent search for more prominent international actorness. EU foreign policies still largely lie, as to their shaping and conduct, in Member States' own foreign policy preferences. Dynamics of Europeanization should therefore not be overlooked in Somalia, for they contribute to a better understanding of EU initiatives, as the section on the United Kingdom and France's approaches to Somalia shows.

A final set of reflections aims at dissecting the various policy tools put forward by the EU in Somalia to evaluate their efficiency and accountability from a legal and economic perspective. Empirical analysis of the measures implemented in Somalia over recent years shows little progress whether in nurturing civil society or in curbing the pirate scourge. Hence the need to understand the reasons behind the lack of a continuum between the stated goals and the actual outcome. Tracing the boundaries between the respective impact of exogenous and endogenous causes on the gap between goals and results will undoubtedly improve the policy decision-making and implementation processes.

This chapter unfolds around six sections. The first one explains some key concepts in EU foreign policy theory that enlighten the underlying dynamics in the EU involvement in Somalia. Due account is then taken of the general link between Member States' national foreign policies and European foreign policy, also noticeable in Somalia. The second section highlights specific Europeanization processes through case studies of the United Kingdom and France. Section 3 looks into the European "ploughs" in Somalia, as structural foreign policy tools that contribute to peacebuilding through far-reaching objectives. The European "swords," that is, the security dimension of the EU policy toward Somalia, and notably the various military and civilian missions launched within this framework will be assessed in the fourth section. Evidence gathered on policy performance in both dimensions will lay the foundations to elucidating, by way of conclusion, whether the European involvement in Somalia is best illustrated by either "ploughs" or "swords."

Key debates in EU foreign policy that spill over in Somalia

Although the situation in Somalia has been nowhere near a functioning state since 1991, it was piracy at sea which set off the alarms in the Member States of the EU in late 2007. The negative side effects of piracy on various European policies³ led to a rapid securitization⁴ of this topic that rendered easier the supranational pooling of resources. Hence, the first European joint naval military operation in December 2008. At the same time, European official documents reflect an awareness that off-shore initiatives merely fought the symptom instead of the disease—widespread statelessness in Somalia. The insecurity of the country both on land and at sea rendered the delivery of humanitarian aid a dangerous exercise. If order was to return to the seas, sound development policies aimed at stabilizing the country should be implemented in Somalia.

It is argued in this chapter that the EU's involvement in Somalia adds to its overall strategy to secure structural actorness at the international level. The EU has, since the end of the Cold War, struggled to reorganize its foreign policy tools so as to reduce vulnerability and foster its influence at the international scene. Keukeleire and MacNaughtan measure a structural foreign policy by its ability to "influence or shape sustainable political, legal, socio-economic, security and mental structures" over the long-term. A would-be structural foreign policy actor like the EU would thus master the techniques of successfully combining the resort to traditional foreign policy tools (military

interventions, economic or trade sanctions) with other instruments primarily aimed at producing a long-term impact on partners. In doing so, it would not only rely on traditional counterparts but also on nongovernmental actors and societal forces.⁵

The expression “comprehensive approach” would reflect an efficient combination of such policy instruments. This concept was originally coined in the framework of conflict management, due to the collapse of traditional assumptions about statelessness’s implications for global security in the post-2001 paradigm,⁶ but then spread to general foreign and security policy discourse. However, the lack of a clear definition blurs the boundaries with neighboring concepts such as coherence or integrated mission. Different states and international organizations advocate comprehensive approaches that mean different things, hampering understanding of the term.⁷ The EU is not an exception in this regard: the comprehensive approach is used persistently but is devoid of a consistent meaning in the official narrative. The expression may alternatively imply that a given policy will take due account of the interests of various stakeholders, that resources and policy tools across various policy areas shall be efficiently combined for a better performance, or that the various EU institutions involved in policy-making will step in in a coordinated way. However, claiming a comprehensive approach is paramount to the EU communication policy: it conveys the organization’s consistent engagement toward all the stakeholders in the policy area, it articulates the willingness to pursue selfless and far-reaching goals instead of selfish short-term ones. A policy-framer claiming to have put in place a comprehensive approach highlights its own capacity to efficiently manage multidisciplinary policy tools or policy areas to cause a sizeable impact on complex grounds.

In the framework of the EU foreign policy, a comprehensive approach usually refers to the combination of civil and military tools in the framework of common defense policy operations. However, increasingly often, it embodies a combination of foreign policy tools across policy areas in which not only the nature of the power exerted by the EU varies between exclusive and shared competences, but also the power balance between the main European institutions. Some policy areas, such as development, are jointly decided by the European Parliament and the Council, with the Commission setting the agenda through its exclusive right of initiative. Conversely, issues related to the common defense policy are decided on a unanimous basis in the Council, with a lesser role for the Commission and the Parliament. All in all, an EU comprehensive approach essentially means that both Member States and European institutions have successfully agreed to embark on a common cause, despite their different powers and levels of involvement. Interestingly, the lack of definition will not hamper broad acceptance if the expression is

repeated tirelessly. At the EU level, every single organ or institution endowed with foreign policy-making powers has committed at one moment or another to a comprehensive approach to relieving the situation in Somalia, in what might be considered a rare example of “speaking with a single voice.”⁸ A positive assessment on European integration itself can thus be read between the lines at the decision-making stage, which turns a blind eye to future assessments on the degree of performance. In fact, however appealing the comprehensive approach may appear in theory, its practical implementation faces challenges that reduce its performance. The involvement of various actors implies that competing policy goals will be at stake, the number of bureaucratic stumbling blocks will be multiplied, the decision-making process will be put off by coordination, and a significant effort will be required to surmount the lack of shared understanding that stems from different administrative cultures.⁹ Additionally, the fact that the EU is neither a state nor an international organization primarily devoted to military defense, unlike NATO, seriously prevents it from resorting to conflict resolution strategies that rely only on military strength, and thus pushes for a comprehensive approach.

The extent to which the EU acts as a structural power regarding Somalia will be a recurrent theme in this chapter, with a particular focus on whether this official statement and others alike are matched by actual facts. It will be argued that the practical implementation of European strategy toward Somalia has largely contradicted the abovementioned official discourse. EU involvement in Somalia has been described as a battery of initiatives coming from every foreign policy area (a “multi-pillar response to a cross-pillar issue”¹⁰) and, although cross-policy coordination has improved over time, the practical impact of the strategy remains subject to other challenges.

The Europeanization of national foreign policies in Somalia through the case studies of the United Kingdom and France in Somalia

Assessment of the EU approach to state building in Somalia requires that due attention be paid to the effect of domestic foreign policies, agendas, and preferences on supranational policy-making. Three sorts of Europeanization processes can be identified in the interplay between EU institutions and foreign ministries as far as a specific issue is concerned: a first set of dynamics relates to the way in which Member States, whose foreign policy agenda takes account of that matter, may struggle to “upload” national preferences while shaping EU foreign policy; other Member States do not display a specific interest in the

issue at stake, yet they can hardly avoid the “download” of policy preferences agreed at the European level; finally, “sideways” Europeanization processes horizontally result from the sociological interactions among various national actors, both at the European level and on the ground. Socialization, mutual learning and policy transfer among national actors lead to policy convergence at the European level. Throughout the whole chapter, Europeanization dynamics are underlined. In addition, this section focuses on the specific features of British and French involvement in Somalia.

That the United Kingdom (UK) is a key international player when it comes to Somalia is an understatement. The stabilization of Somalia is paramount for UK interests, not so much geographically as former metropolis and key destination country for the Somali Diaspora, but especially for security reasons. Somalia fits well in two of the priorities set by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in its Strategic Framework of 2008: countering terrorism and weapons proliferation, and preventing armed conflict.

Over the last years, Britain has developed a multipronged approach toward Somalia that encompasses unilateral efforts at the international level with the boost of initiatives agreed within the framework of the European Union. In doing so, the United Kingdom has been both a successful “uploader” of national foreign policy preferences into the EU decision-making process and a successful competitor for international leadership in the Horn of Africa. Evidence of this statement is best provided by the United Kingdom push to the launching of EU Atalanta operation (2008), and the London Conference of February 2012.

As regards the EU common foreign and defense policy, the United Kingdom may well be described as a skeptic actor. European partners’ poor performance as regards joint defense commitments has triggered frustration in successive British governments leading to increased disengagement toward EU defense initiatives.¹¹ Over recent times, the United Kingdom has turned to individual Member States for bilateral defense cooperation projects, a good example of which is the Treaty on bilateral Defence cooperation signed with France on 2 November 2010. Although this initiative has been presented as an avant-garde force that will eventually persuade other European states to join in,¹² the public rhetoric highlighted instead the autonomy and sovereignty of partner states in cross-channel cooperation, thus keeping EU defense matters at bay.¹³ The British leadership of EU Atalanta operation, whose details will be further examined in next sections, is an exception, and only because it remains cost effective. The United Kingdom led discussions at the EU level in the run-up to launching the first EU naval military operation. It is worth noting that no military operation is decided autonomously at the EU level, that is, at least one member state must appear as the framework nation and successfully engage

the others. United Kingdom was the leading state behind Atalanta operation in the Indian Ocean: it provided the operational headquarters in Northwood and the first commander, and has remained a key contributor to the military capacity of the operation ever since.

Beyond the EU framework, the United Kingdom has kept its international clout as regards Somalia, and not merely as a donor. Recent times have witnessed an enhanced British presence on the ground, with high-profile visits including the Foreign Secretary himself traveling to Somalia for the first time in 20 years, as well as the Secretary of State for International Development.¹⁴

In late February 2012, the United Kingdom hosted in London the most important conference on Somalia in recent times. Appraised as a milestone in the Somali peace process, the final communiqué expressed the parties' agreement not to extend the mandate of the transitional federal institutions beyond August 2012 and set a roadmap for their replacement. The London conference was a success of UK diplomacy to the extent that representatives of around 50 states and organizations (including the United Nations, the AU, and the United States) gathered together. The United Kingdom engaged a number of Somali stakeholders, both on the ground and at home, both in politics and in business, in a rare example of empowering the locals. The Somali diaspora in particular was present at the London Conference and the British were able to offer a seat at the table to key factions such as *Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah* and representatives of Puntland and Galmudug, and were thus more successful than other international players with a prominent role in Somalia, notably Turkey.¹⁵

Also, the United Kingdom has used its permanent seat at the UNSC to assert its leadership in Somalia. Unsurprisingly, Britain drafted the UNSC resolution of 22 February 2012 which expanded African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) military strength by almost 50 percent and international financial support in order to fight Al Shabaab. A very timely rotation of the presidency of the UN Security Council in March 2012 then allowed the United Kingdom to ensure the proper follow-up to the London Conference.¹⁶

A final initiative is the signature of a trial and detention agreement with Mauritius in late October 2012, whereby this country would receive and try suspected pirates arrested by British troops in the Indian Ocean.

Drawing on the abovementioned examples, it can be argued that British frustration with the EU lack of dynamism is the main driving force behind its autonomous initiatives in Somalia.

Unlike the United Kingdom, France has carried out its own defense policy wholly in line with the European defense policy, whose strengthening is a priority since this member state returned to NATO integrated command

in 2008.¹⁷ Europeanization processes are thus more evident in France. Regarding Somalia, Europeanization became clear in the launching of the Atalanta operation, although for different reasons than in the UK case. Since early 2007, France contributed substantially to humanitarian relief in Somalia by providing escorts to the WFP vessels through its Alcyon operation. When this policy preference was successfully “uploaded” to the EU level, the original mandate of the Atalanta operation stated that humanitarian protection was its top priority, whereas the actual capacity devoted to that task has been minimal in comparison with counter-piracy efforts.

At the political level, France has supported national reconciliation efforts in Somalia in the framework of the Djibouti peace process and through regular consultations with members of the TFG government. Additionally, France has the lead on training security forces in Africa, notably those of the African Union missions. The experience acquired with AMISOM soldiers in Djibouti allowed France to play an active role as framework nation (next to Spain) in the EU training provided in Uganda to the TFG soldiers.

The European ploughs in Somalia: A long-lasting quest for comprehensiveness and a progressive securitization

This section examines the various policy tools that aim at improving the situation in Somalia through a structural foreign policy approach. Although the bulk of initiatives pertain to the EU development policy, complementary tools implemented in adjacent policy areas are not disregarded. However, the ability of the EU to put in place a truly comprehensive approach to Somalia has been absent for a long time, a feature explained more by the challenges faced by the EU foreign policy itself than by the existing difficulties on the Somali ground. The multifaceted answer to a cross-policy concern put in place by the EU has become too recently a formal comprehensive approach to Somalia, in the form of the Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa adopted by the European Council on 14 November 2011. Five priorities are set for the EU, namely capable and accountable statebuilding, conflict resolution, and prevention; preventing the internationalization of security concerns, promoting economic growth, and supporting regional economic cooperation. Piracy and political stability are also mentioned. As of early 2012, the EU strategy has also a visible face in the form of an EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa, the Greek Alexander Rondos.¹⁸ Yet it remains to be seen whether this new approach will meet the stated goal of bringing together instruments and

capabilities for a more effective change in Somalia or if it will stay another EU-as-a-global-actor visibility operation for domestic consumption.

The combined official development aid of the EU and member states renders them the biggest world donor, but the EU is an international organization and remains legally subject to the principle of conferral, meaning that the Union acts only to the extent that the Member States have conferred competences on it. Accounting for EU development policy must thus start by a reference to the goals that constrain common action under the constitutive treaty. From a legal perspective, the philosophy underneath the EU development policy has evolved from a general support to developing sustainable conditions in recipient countries toward the current stress on poverty reduction with a view to its eventual eradication, in line with the mainstream at the United Nations.¹⁹

Geographically oriented programs have traditionally prevailed in EU Development policy. In this sense, Somalia is part of the Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries and benefits from the financial schemes set up by the 1975 Lome Convention between the European Community and these countries. Somalia initially signed the Lome Convention, yet the lack of effective government prevented it from signing subsequent multiannual revisions, the last one being the 2000 Cotonou Partnership Agreement. As a result, Somalia receives distinct treatment within the European Development Fund (EDF), the main channel for distributing EU development aid to ACP countries. The EDF escapes the general framework of the EU budget in that it is funded through national contributions; however, EU institutions carry out financial management. The European Commission executed the EDF through the EuropeAid office, although a small budgetary line for humanitarian aid and was managed by ECHO; but these tasks have been assumed by the European External Action Service since its creation in December 2010.

Practical implementation of the EDF lies in close involvement of the local authorities, despite the risk of mismanagement posed by structural weaknesses in recipient countries. As a general rule, an individual request from the ACP partner triggers a financial decision at the EU level to release development funds, the local authority designed as National Authorizing Officer then proceeds with payments, yet management operations are eventually monitored by the EU services. Somalia has been excluded from this procedure since 1992; instead, the EDF Chief Authorizing Officer (currently the Head of the EU delegation in Nairobi) acts as National Authorizing Officer, "on behalf of the Somali people."²⁰ This lack of involvement of Somali authorities in the management of EU development funds undermines local ownership.

It should be noted that the EU has embraced territorial integrity in Somalia without clearly stating it. Official documents recognize the existing gaps

between governance indicators in Somaliland and Puntland, and those in Central and South Somalia, but the EDF implementation procedure as described above has not taken such differences into account. Somalilanders have been particularly exasperated with extra delays in the access to European funds caused by the need to channel every single funding decision from Hargeysa to Nairobi. Council conclusions of March 2011 suggested a perceived need to engage regional and local administrations,²¹ an idea possibly epitomized in the official visit of Commissioner for Development Piebalgs to Somaliland in July the same year. Before the Somaliland Parliament and President Simayo, Commissioner Piebalgs commended the contribution by Somaliland to peace and good governance in Somalia. He stated that the stability situation was worthy of additional development funds to be implemented in Somaliland, a pledge that triggered local enthusiasm²² although its real meaning was not that of support *for* Somaliland, but *in* Somaliland.²³ All in all, such initiatives remain extraordinary to date and do not reflect the very nature of the partnership the EU desires to implement in Somalia, which focuses on the dialogue with the central state.²⁴

EDF strategies and priorities are established for a 7-year timeframe currently covering 2007–2013. This replicates the multiannual financial perspectives agreed by Member States to set maximum expenditure ceilings in all EU policies. The European Commission's Joint Strategy Paper for Somalia 2008–13²⁵ represents a thorough planning document which develops a strategic framework at various thematic and hierarchical levels. Arguably, the underlying ambition is not matched by the meager financial allocation over the reference period: EUR 215.8 million mostly earmarked to macroeconomic support and some sectoral policies such as social services, productive services and the environment, and livelihoods.

This said, local insecurity severely limits long-term development initiatives in Somalia. The main stress has been traditionally put on food aid, consistent with the general assessment that humanitarian relief accounts for some 70 percent of development aid in Somalia.²⁶ Under the EU Food Security Thematic Programme, the EU makes funds available to organizations (NGOs, UN agencies, and international organizations) which have previously concluded a partnership agreement with the Commission and make specific requests in the aftermath of an emergency. Again, a large majority of funds is managed remotely from neighboring countries.

Somalia benefits from another thematic program, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). Flexibility is a key feature of the EIDHR, in the sense that the EU may bypass public authorities to interact with non-state actors. When it comes to Somalia, however, this advantage becomes a challenge due to the lack of civil society.²⁷ The Commission has long

rejected Somali non-state actors as EIDHR applicants, considering that they were ill-prepared to fulfil management tasks.²⁸ Support for non-state actors in Somalia was paradoxically implemented through funding other countries' non-state actors. Besides, the legal requirement to carry out all actions in close cooperation with a Somali counterpart was hardly met. Drawing on evidence from the 2000 to 09 period, the EIDHR investment in Somalia was split among minor projects whose long-term sustainability was hardly probable and that funds largely benefitted European actors without link to the Somali diaspora.²⁹ That situation has slightly improved since 2010, for EIDHR Annual calls expressly ask prospect applicants to associate with a Somali partner. The Somali NGO steps in as an informal partner who implements the funds, yet the European applicant remains financially responsible before the EU. This is a step forward in on-the-spot capacity-building but historical perspective is needed to draw conclusions on its actual performance.

A final reflection is offered on the role played by the Instrument for Stability (IfS) in Somalia. This financial facility blurs the line between development and security in EU policy since its inception in 2006. Although its long-term component might contribute to stabilizing some core areas, it has been reluctant to engage in core areas due to the security situation. Take mine clearance as an example: no project on demining has been implemented in Somalia since 2005.³⁰ Instead, the long-term component of IfS has focused on boosting institutional capacity of regional allies such as Kenya and Seychelles in their counter-piracy efforts,³¹ as well as on funding AMISOM. This is a good example of the steady securitization of EU development policy in Somalia over the last years. The opacity of EU budgetary dynamics hampers a clear image of the amount of development aid that ends up paying for security, yet the EU has been a sustained supporter of the African Union's AMISOM through the EDF and IfS.³²

EU approaches to security in Somalia have evolved over the time. Following successive failed international interventions in Somalia, the international community became aware of the necessity to promote a regional approach to security in this country. The focus has shifted to support for the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) in the framework of the Djibouti Peace Process. This mission was deployed in March 2007 on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 1744 to help stabilize Somalia and create a secure environment for reconciliation talks. The inherent difficulty of the mission is extraordinary, due to the acute gaps in terms of capabilities. Only 1,600 Ugandan troops and 440 Burundian troops of a planned 8,000-strong mission have so far been deployed.

The EU has contributed to AMISOM with funds from the development policy. This was pointed out in the first part of this chapter and will now be

further developed against the backdrop of the Africa Peace Facility contribution to AMISOM.

The African Peace Facility (APF) was created in July 2003 in response to a request made by the AU Maputo Summit. It enshrines the rapid and positive response of the EU to the African resolve to take responsibility for its own peace and security. The APF thus draws on and backs African ownership. Support is granted to African-led peacekeeping operations deployed in Africa and is kept under the close supervision of the African Union in the framework of its emerging security structure (given its broad political mandate in the area of conflict prevention, management, resolution, and peace building in this continent). The scope of eligible costs under the APF covers any action linked to the deployment of peacekeeping forces, such as transportation of troops to the theater of operations, or payment of soldiers' salaries and living expenses. Nonetheless, under no circumstances may the EU finance military and arms expenditure.

Broad European financial support allows for AU operations to rely on predictable and substantial funds.³³ The first financing period, running from 2004–07, was allocated an initial amount of €250m, which came from the EDF under the Cotonou Agreement, that is to say, African countries also contributed to it. AMIS in Darfur/Sudan was the first AU mission to receive funds from the APF (€12m). The second financial framework covers the 2008–10 period and financial allocation amounts to €300m under the Intra-ACP Indicative Programme of the 10th EDF. According to the action plan established by the European Commission,³⁴ the main priorities of the second period of reference were: support to peace operations (€200m, the core of funds), operationalization of the African Peace, and Security Architecture and the Africa–EU dialogue (€65m) and early response mechanisms (€15m). However, on 15 June 2010, the African Union Commission requested an additional amount of €47m to contribute to AMISOM costs for the second half of the year 2010, which was positively assessed by the European Commission and endorsed by the EU Political and Security Committee on 25 June 2010.

The APF being the main financial facility channeling EU support for security in Somalia, further funds have been made available by means of the Instrument for Stability, especially aimed at setting a strategic management, planning and monitoring unit within AMISOM. Between 2008 and mid-2009, its €5m allocation primarily covered the salaries of the planners at AMISOM's headquarters in Addis Ababa and the liaison office in Nairobi. Sustainability has led to the financing through the APF after the expiring date.

If we are to assess the impact of AMISOM, and thus the impact of EU support in this regard, a number of concerns should be noted. The first one relates to long-term sustainability. Despite extended EU funding, AMISOM

just manages to survive from day to day. AMISOM troops currently control the seaport, the airport, and the president's residence, Villa Somalia. Alas, taking care of their own security is a true challenge for these soldiers, let alone pacifying Somalia. A long-term perspective entails the need for broader contributions from other African countries, and this seems difficult for the time being. Hence the EU reiterated calls on international partners to enhance their support to AMISOM in the form of troops, equipment, and funds. In this context, the 2008 UN report on the modalities of support to peacekeeping operations, adopted under the chair of the President of the European Commission in 2008 acquires a bitter meaning: "It is simply undesirable to expect peacekeeping missions to deploy into uncertain situations without the necessary means. It is a recipe for failure. We are deluding ourselves if we believe that having something on the ground is better than doing nothing. In the absence of the necessary capabilities, such an approach brings a high level of risk, not only of failure but also of raising expectations of the people that cannot be fulfilled. Worse still, it undermines the credibility of peacekeeping and weakens the organization that is responsible."³⁵

The second concern links to the perceptions of Somali people on the operation and Somali ownership itself. Although support of AMISOM troops enhances African ownership in the Somali conflict, as opposed to a genuinely foreign intervention on the international community side, it faces a similar rejection from local population. Endogenous perceptions have been seriously undermined by the lack of accountability following repeated allegations of human rights violations committed by AMISOM troops, and by unfortunate operations in densely populated areas which have been read as indiscriminate bombardments (specially grievous was the raid on the Bakara Market on 23 September 2010).

Drawing on previous analysis, we argue that EU development policy in Somalia focuses on short-term tools (primarily food aid) limited to alleviating the extreme situation in this country, but unlikely to provide long-lasting changes; and long-term tools that, instead of focusing on the people's necessities (according to human security considerations), have traditionally struggled to enhance security around the official institutions of the TFG.

In this sense, the results of investigations carried out in 2012 by the United Nations and the World Bank and denouncing an impressive level of financial mismanagement and corruption in the TFG have led to a substantially tighter EU approach toward financing capacity-building in Somalia. According to the latest Council conclusions,³⁶ the EU will make further release of funds conditional on compliance with basic accountability standards, as the EU Special Representative Alexander Rondos bluntly stated before the House of Lords in June 2012: "the European Union, as a whole, tends to get viewed. . .

as a cash cow to be milked at will. That has to end. My job is, in effect, to say: 'Well, if you want our cash, there is a series of other parallel discussions we are going to have regarding politics, security and the like before we just dish out money'."³⁷

In the post-TFG period, the EU has been the main donor in the run-up toward the adoption of a democratic constitution in Somalia. A financial commitment of EUR 6 million funded EU training and legal assistance to the Independent Federal Constitutional Commission, as well as broad consultations, initiatives aimed at raising awareness among the people, the printing and dissemination of the Constitution and even the meeting of the traditional leaders that appointed the members of the Constituent Assembly in July 2012.

Beyond development policy, EU initiatives to prevent and deter illegal fishing might also contribute to state reconstruction in the Horn of Africa. A legal package adopted within the framework of the European fisheries policy entered into force in January 2010³⁸ to deter illegal fishing through a varying array of measures. Broadly speaking, a more stringent control of the legality of fishery products is made possible through enhanced traceability and a greater number of inspections, a ban on importing fishery products obtained from IUU fishing into the EU, the prohibition of transshipments between third-country vessels and EU vessels in places other than ports, and the establishment of blacklists of vessels involved in illegal fishing and non-cooperating states (these may be subject to counter-measures decided by the Council, which may go as far as the denunciation of standing bilateral fisheries agreements).

Although the new regime was not adopted in view of specifically suppressing illegal fishing activities in Somalia, Somalia perfectly corresponds to the image of a coastal state lacking the resources to properly control their territorial waters. Illegal fishing has often been referred to as one of the root causes of piracy, and might be significantly reduced by adequate performance under the new regime. A further step might then be to negotiate a Fisheries Partnership Agreement (FPA) with Somalia. FPAs grant access to the partners' fisheries resources in exchange for EU structural support to the local fishing sector; it would contribute to recovery of the Somali fishing industry, provided the government offers proof of administrative capacity.

A double-edged sword? Initiatives to improve security in the framework of the CSDP

This part will look at the European initiatives created within the framework of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) of the European Union.

The three military and civilian operations launched by the EU in the Horn of Africa will be successively explored: EUNAVFOR or Atalanta, EUTM-Somalia, and EUCAP Nestor. It is worth noting from the outset that all three operations are designed for implementation over a limited timeframe, a feature that limits their ability to become structural foreign policy tools.

The EU naval military operation off the coast of Somalia was agreed following demands by the UNSC in the framework of Chapter VII of the UN Charter.³⁹ The fact that this chapter is normally used to address threats to international peace, breaches of peace or acts of aggression, proves the serious nature attached to pirate attacks in the Horn of Africa. Early December 2008, the UNSC authorized the use of force against pirates within territorial waters of Somalia for an initial period of 12 months.⁴⁰ It then encouraged states and regional organizations to conclude agreements with bordering countries in order to try suspected pirates detained in the course of such operations.⁴¹

Against this backdrop, the Council adopted Joint Action 2008/851/CFSP⁴² on 11 November 2008 and launched Atalanta operation, the first European naval military operation. Atalanta is groundbreaking at sea, and it adds to EU willingness to go beyond the traditional self-assigned role of mere peacebuilder to set boots on the new ground of defending EU Member States national security interests.

The initial one-year mandate of Atalanta was successively extended by the Council and currently runs until December 2014. European States contribute to Atalanta on a voluntary basis, a general rule common to all CSDP operations which results in variable geometry. Whereas some Member States send troops to the theater of operations, others contribute to the conduct of the operation at the headquarters in Northwood. Whereas Denmark benefits from an opt-out clause in EU defense matters and does not partake in Atalanta⁴³ but plays an active role in Somalia within the NATO framework, some third countries such as Norway or Croatia have chosen to sign cooperation agreements with the EU to participate in the mission.⁴⁴

Assessing EUNAVFOR's impact on the ground involves reflection on its capacity to match expectations with actual facts. However, various drawbacks undermine the operation's impact.⁴⁵

The mandate of this operation is primarily aimed at protecting the World Food Programme chartered vessels en route to Somalia intending to deliver humanitarian aid. Escort, including on-board armed protection, is the mechanism selected for preventing pirate attacks against these ships. Protection of the African Union ships with supplies for AMISOM troops in Mogadishu was not expressly foreseen in the Joint Action but fell into the general scope of protection for other ships. There is broad agreement on the fact that the main success of the EU operation has been the protection of

WFP and AU vessels. By contrast, merchant shipping vessels only benefit from protection in the framework of previously arranged convoys alongside a safe corridor in the Gulf of Aden. The protection provided by the EU operation is enshrined in the global effort to combat piracy in the framework of the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) mechanism. In this regard, EUNAVFOR closely coordinates with other multinational, national, and regional naval forces patrolling the area. Following a scheme based on rotation, all naval assets take active responsibility for protecting vessels alongside the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor, regardless of their respective nationalities.

Nonetheless, the rules of engagement limited the resort to force in both cases until February 2012. Drawing on article 2 of the framework Joint Action 2008/851/PESC, which originally established a legal mandate close to dissuading piracy, rather than fighting it, the rules of engagement interpreted the concept of “defense” against a pirate attack in a restrictive way that ruled out any active defense against pirates, notably inspections of skiffs or blockage of major pirate ports.

At sea, European warships face difficulties in reaching the crime scene before the vessel has been hijacked or robbed; their only choice is to pursue the pirates with a view to arresting them. Prosecution of pirate suspects has turned into a headache for EU member states. *Atalanta* is legally entitled to detain suspected pirates, as well as seize the vessels and the goods on board, but gathering the evidence necessary to successfully indict the detainees in European courts proved a burdensome task. From a legal point of view, the principle of conferral of competence restrains action to piracy cases alone, meaning that *Atalanta* lacks a general competence to police the area as regards other criminal activities, such as drug smuggling or trafficking in human beings. Many mother ships or skiffs may seem suspicious in the waters off Somalia in current times, but they do not legally become pirates (and liable before the European forces) until they make an attempt at seizing a vessel. This is the reason why *Atalanta* does not prosecute pirates who look suspicious on the basis of their equipment, but those who are caught in the act.

Broad criticisms on the shortcomings of *Atalanta*’s mandate eventually gathered the necessary agreement within the Council to extend, in March 2012, the geographical scope to include Somali coastal areas and internal and territorial waters, in order to disrupt pirate logistic dumps.⁴⁶ Despite the initial welcome at both EU and national levels, only one attack (15 May 2012) has been carried out so far on this ground, raising questions over the effectiveness of such measures.

The EU channeled legal concerns on prosecution through transfer agreements with some neighboring states: Kenya and Seychelles in 2009,

followed by negotiations with Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda with no positive outcome.⁴⁷ Member States which do not desire to try the arrested pirates themselves may resort to the transfer scheme.

Transfer agreements raise a much deeper concern as regards the protection of human rights. Both Kenya and Seychelles committed themselves, in their respective agreements with the EU, to treating transferred pirates humanely and ensuring a fair trial respectful of enhanced human rights standards (both agreements include an extensive list of procedural human rights, as well as a general exclusion of torture and death penalty). Yet actual compliance with these provisions hinges on purely diplomatic assurances. The fact that both humane treatment of inmates and human rights protection are conspicuous by their absence in Kenya⁴⁸ not only causes serious damage to EU credibility as a human rights promoter at the international level; it could also trigger the future international responsibility of the EU, which enjoys full legal personality under article 47 of the Lisbon Treaty on the European Union. In fact, the Strasbourg European Court of Human Rights increasingly rejects diplomatic assurances as a legitimating way out of its responsibilities for the transferring state, should a human rights violation occur regarding a transferred prisoner.⁴⁹

A brief reference should finally be made to the existing mismatch between Atalanta's capabilities and the area covered by the mission's scope. As the NATO operations Commander once said: "it's like patrolling Western Europe with a couple of police cars—there is no way you can respond to every robbery."⁵⁰ However, a simple comparison between EUNAVFOR's financial envelope and that of other defense operations claiming a higher profile of the EU in Africa shows that the naval military operation is at a disadvantage. Common costs in Atalanta amount to over €8.3m per year for around 1000 staff, while the peacekeeping force in eastern Chad has 3,700 troops. Furthermore, the relevant authorities have echoed a capability shortfall which is particularly acute in the field of airborne surveillance (maritime patrol aircraft, helicopters, even unmanned aerial vehicles that are currently being used in combat areas), which could be key to successfully detecting and preventing pirate attacks.⁵¹

The second Common Defense and Security Operation is the European Union Training Mission Somalia which, despite its name, is based in neighboring Uganda. UNSC Resolution 1872 (2009) made an urgent call for technical assistance to Somali security forces, in the field of training and equipment, and the EU took on the responsibility. On 15 February 2010 member states agreed, within the Council, to conduct a military training mission in Uganda, upon invitation of the latter, with the objective of contributing to a comprehensive and sustainable perspective for the development of the Somali security sector.⁵² EUTM-Somalia engaged to training 2,000 Somali soldiers, split in two intakes of 1,000 soldiers each, over a year timeframe ending in April 2011.

The EUTM is carried out in tight cooperation with AMISOM, whose mandate includes training, mentoring, advising, monitoring, and restructuring Somali security institutions. In June 2010, this mission deployed 15 police trainers to Djibouti to facilitate the training of 500 Somali officers. In Mogadishu, AMISOM currently trains 50 Somali officers in a wide range of tasks, covering searching, investigation, and de-mining.

Training not only focuses on military concerns, but also includes a wide chapter on human rights and humanitarian matters. Following guidelines on the mainstreaming of human rights concerns into the different phases of CSDP missions has been the general rule since 2006. EUTM Somalia is not different: an human rights and gender advisor was hired to provide specific courses to the trainees. If such education is essential to any CDP mission, it becomes even truer in the specific case of EUTM, in which the target group is made up of illiterate young men at serious risk of turning themselves into human rights perpetrators when they reintegrate into Somalia. The difficult context in which the mission is implemented is worth recalling, for several issues might render useless any effort to raise awareness toward human rights and gender concerns.⁵³ Not the least of these is the presence of former child soldiers among the trainees. In fact, EUTM trains recruits previously selected by the Transitional Federal Government, but the selection process became a task of its own. A large number of candidates were discarded because they were unable to prove their age or did not meet the 18-year threshold to which the European planners had committed. Besides, communicating the real meaning of respecting people's human rights as security forces is persistently challenged by the pervasive cultural clash with a society that tolerates feminine genital mutilation, polygamy, or the death penalty for homosexuals.

Sustainability is a main concern. Ensuring that all trained soldiers effectively commit themselves to the goals of the TFG instead of joining the warring forces hinges on the troops' own security once the mission has withdrawn, both as regards salaries and protection.⁵⁴ The EU and Japan are the only donors that ensure the payment of stipends, currently to over 5,000 Somali soldiers. In the case of the EU, it contributes to police reform in Puntland, Somaliland, and South-Central Somalia through the UNDP, with an allocation of EUR 15.5 million for 2009–12, out of which EUR 3.5 million are earmarked for stipends. This feature obviously poses a strong concern from the perspective of long-term sustainability.

A final reference will be made next to a new civilian operation agreed in the framework of the CSDP on 16 July 2012.⁵⁵ The Council of the EU launched EUCAP Nestor to support maritime capacity-building in the Western Indian Ocean region. Benefitting states are Djibouti, Kenya, and the Seychelles, with a prospect extension to Tanzania, all of them receiving EU expert advice

on legal, policy, and operational matters concerning maritime security as well as financial help in the purchase of the necessary equipment. A second branch of the mission focuses in training a Somali coastal police force and judges to prosecute suspected pirates. An initial budgetary allocation of EUR 22.8 million was allocated to this mission, whose headquarters are in Djibouti.⁵⁶

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, an overview has been provided of the different proposals put forward by the EU for peacekeeping and state-building in Somalia. Some of them have a stronger long-term component, while others put the stress on the short term. The EU involvement in Somalia is close to that of a structural power in the sense that it combines foreign policy tools of different a nature with a view to triggering a change on the ground. However, the impact obtained so far is rather limited and far from being sustainable in the long run. Although official statements underline that the EU “is working actively to promote stability on shore and to tackle the threat of piracy off shore”⁵⁷ in Somalia—none of that being false—, the chances of truly leaving behind a Somali-owned functioning state upon withdrawal seem minimal for the time being.

Notes

- 1 “. . . and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks,” The Bible, Isaiah 2:4.
- 2 European Council, *A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 12 December 2003; further revised by European Council, *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy – Providing Security in a Changing World*, S407/08, Brussels, 11 December 2008.
- 3 The most prominent examples include: vessel seizures, soaring maritime insurance, growing risk for security of oil supply, a credible risk of a major environmental disaster should a tanker be set on fire or sunk in the course of a pirate attack. In addition, the decrease in the yearly turnover of European fishermen operating off the Somali coasts should not be disregarded: tuna season off the Somali coast accounts for around 35 percent of the yearly turnover, potentially reaching 70 percent, according to interviews conducted in Basque tuna fishing companies.
- 4 Constituencies’ support to foreign intervention largely hinge on prior securitization processes. Regarding Somalia, the alleged link between piracy and jihad substantially worsened the risk posed by pirates alone, while evidence gathered by some authors prove it wrong and only beneficial to

- marine insurers. Currun Singh and Arjun Singh Bedi, "'War on Piracy': the Conflation of Somali Piracy with Terrorism in Discourse, Tactic and Law," *International Institute of Social Studies*, WP 543, Rotterdam, (May 2012), 18.
- 5 Stephen Keukeleire and Jennifer MacNaughtan, *The Foreign Policy of the European Union* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 25–6.
 - 6 Weak states, previously perceived as a source of mere internal conflict, were bound to take the place of strong "predatory" states in the "securitization" discourse of the "other" that would, in turn, legitimize further foreign liberal intervention, according to Jan Bachman and Jana Hönke, "'Peace and security' as counterterrorism? The political effects of liberal interventions in Kenya," *African Affairs* 109/434 (2009), 98–9.
 - 7 Cedric de Coning and Karsten Friis, "Coherence and coordination. The limits of the comprehensive approach," *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 15 (2011), 251; Michael J. Williams, "Empire Lite Revisited: NATO, the Comprehensive Approach and State-building in Afghanistan," *International Peacekeeping* 18:1 (2011), 64–78.
 - 8 Council conclusions have been consistent in this regard from General Affairs and External Relations Council Conclusions of 22–29 July 2008 (PRES/08/207) to Council Conclusions of 14 May 2012 (Ref. 9596/12), the aim of the "comprehensive approach" being "linking security policy with development, the rule of law, respect for human rights, gender-related aspects and international humanitarian law," as the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 14 June 2010 stated. The same applies to documents of the Commission (eg. Joe Borg, "Combating Piracy: Strength in Unity," speech by the Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs at the Seminar on piracy and armed robbery against shipping, Brussels, 21 January 2009) or the High Representative Baroness Catherine Ashton (e.g. 2009 Annual Report of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, June 2010).
 - 9 Williams, "Empire Lite," 64–78; Sjoerd J. J. Both, "Feeding the crocodile: a military solution to Somali piracy," *Strategic Insights* 36 (2011): 5–7.
 - 10 Maria Luisa Sánchez Barrueco, "Reflections on the EU foreign policy objectives behind the 'integrated approach' in the response to piracy off Somalia," *Croatian Yearbook of European Law and Policy* 3 (2009), 129–239.
 - 11 Clara Marina O'Donnell, "Britain's coalition government and EU defence cooperation: undermining British interests," *International Affairs* 87:2 (2011), 419–33; House of Commons (Foreign Affairs Committee), *Piracy off the coast of Somalia*, HC 1318 (2011), point 56; Paul D. Williams, "Britain, the EU and Africa," in Adekeye Adebajo and Kaye Whiteman (ed.), *The EU and Africa. From Eurafrica to Afro-Europa* (London: Hurst & Co, 2012), 343, 350, 354.
 - 12 John C. Stevens, "Some remarks on the Anglo-French Defence Treaty," *LSE Strategic Update* 11.4 (2011), 4–5; Ben Jones, "Franco-British military cooperation: a new engine for European defence?," *European Union Institute for Security Studies Occasional Paper* 88 (2011).
 - 13 Anand Menon, "European Defence Policy from Lisbon to Libya," *Survival* 53:3 (2011), 88; Patrick Wintour, "Britain and France sign landmark 50-year defence deal," *The Guardian*, (2 November 2010), www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/nov/02/britain-france-landmark-50-year-defence-deal.

- 14 William Hague, "A new effort to build Somalia," Speech at the conference British Government Consultation on Somalia, Chatham House, (8 February 2012), <http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Meetings/Meeting%20Transcripts/080212hague.pdf>.
- 15 As a brand new actor on Somali ground, Turkey has largely stolen the limelight from traditional international players, by displaying a fresh mindset the locals feel comfortable with. Turkey's humanitarian efforts are praised as bolder and more effective in capacity-building than those Western agencies are able to offer. Nevertheless, its diplomacy lacks the international clout of other powers, a feature that was made clear by the absence of Puntland, Galmudug and ASWJ from the 2nd Istanbul Conference on 31 May 2012.
- 16 British leading role was acknowledged by UN SG Ban Ki-Moon, see UN Security Council 6729th meeting of 5 March 2012.
- 17 Caroline Timon, "France's defence policy after the 2008," *Analysis of the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy* (2012), 2–3; Douglas A. Yates, "France, the EU and Africa," in Adekeye Adebajo and Kaye Whiteman (ed.), *The EU and Africa. From Eurafrique to Afro-Europa* (London: Hurst & Co, 2012), 329–33.
- 18 European Council, Conclusions on the Horn of Africa, Annex, A Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa, 14 November 2011, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126052.pdf, accessed 15 December 2012; Decision 2011/819/CFSP, appointing a European Union Special Representative for the Horn of Africa, OJ L 317 of 9 December 2012.
- 19 Comparison between former article 177.1 of the Treaty on the European Community and article 208.1 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in force since 1 December 2009.
- 20 Decision of the ACP-EC Council of Ministers of 18 November 1992.
- 21 "The EU is actively considering increasing its financial assistance to support central, regional and local level administrations in consolidating stable and accountable governance," Council conclusions on Somalia, 3076th Foreign Affairs Council meeting, 21 March 2011, point 14.
- 22 "EU Commissioner Andris Piebalgs announces more support for Somaliland," *Somalilandpress*, 6 July 2011.
- 23 European Commission, "Somaliland: EU Commissioner Andris Piebalgs announces more support for stability and regional cooperation," IP/11/837, 6 July 2011.
- 24 See notably Horn of Africa – EU Development work in the region, 5 August 2011, MEMO/11/549; Remarks by High Representative/Vice President Catherine Ashton at the International Conference on Somalia, London, 23 February 2012, A/78/12; Council conclusions on Somalia, 3166th Foreign Affairs Council meeting, 14 May 2012.
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- 27 Karen E. Smith, *EU Foreign Policy in a Changing World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), 133.
- 28 European Commission, *Guidelines for grant applicants, Open call for proposals 2008*, EUROPEAID/128091/L/ACT/SO.

- 29 Sánchez-Barrueco, "Reflections," 129–239. Along the same line, see Ahmed Soliman, Alex Vines and Jason Mosley, *The EU Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa: A Critical Assessment of Impact and Opportunities*, Study at the request of the European Parliament (AFET Committee) (2012), 21–3.
- 30 European Commission, Action against antipersonnel landmines in Somalia, closed 18 July 2005, EuropeAid/121327/C/G/SO.
- 31 European Commission, *Towards the Integration of Maritime Surveillance: A Common Information Sharing Environment for the EU Maritime Domain*, COM (2009) 538 final, 15 October 2009.
- 32 Financial commitments comprise €15m (2007–08), €20m (2008–09), €60m (2009–10). European Commission, Annex to Decision of 1 September 2010, on an allocation of funds under the African Peace Facility programme to be financed from the 10th EDF (AMISOM IV), http://www.af_aap-spe_2010_africa.pdf, accessed 15 December 2012.
- 33 European Commission, *African Peace Facility Annual Report 2009*, http://www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/regional-cooperation/peace/documents/apf-annual-report-2009_en.pdf, accessed 15 December 2012.
- 34 European Commission, Decision C (2008) 8587, 17 December 2008.
- 35 United Nations, *Report of the African Union–United Nations panel on modalities for support to African Union peacekeeping operations*, (2008) UN doc. A/63/666-S/2008/813, para. 16.
- 36 Council on Foreign Affairs conclusions of August 2012.
- 37 House of Lords (Select Committee on the European Union), *Combating Somali piracy: the EU's naval operation Atalanta – Follow-up report*, Statement by Alexander Rondos, 21 June 2012, page 2.
- 38 Council, Regulation (EC) 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008, establishing a system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (2008) OJ L286; European Commission, Regulation (EC) No 1010/2009 of 22 October 2009 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 (OJ L 280 of 27 October 2009) and Regulation (EU) 86/2010 of 29 January 2010 amending Annex I to Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 (OJ L 26 of 30 January 2010).
- 39 UNSC Resolution 1816 (2008) of 2 June 2008, UN Doc S/RES/1816, authorized States cooperating with the TFG to enter the territorial waters of Somalia in order to repress acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea, provided that the TFG notified it in advance and international law was respected in the course of operations. Furthermore, UNSC Resolution 1838 of 7 October 2008 invited States to deploy naval vessels and military aircraft, in accordance with international law. The Council of the European Union drew on this last Resolution 1838 to launch EUNAVFOR.
- 40 UNSC Resolution 1846 of 2 December 2008. In doing so, the Security Council temporarily established a derogation from article 101 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, whose definition of piracy leaves aside attacks committed in the territorial waters of a State. This provision, linked to article 106 regulating liability for seizure without adequate grounds, raised serious concerns among Member States.
- 41 UNSC Resolution 1851 of 16 December 2008, extended through UNSC Resolutions 1918 and 1950 (2010).

- 42 Council Joint Action 2008/851/CFSP of 10 November 2008 on a European Union military operation to contribute to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coasts (2008) OJ L301/33.
- 43 Article 6 of the Protocol on the position of Denmark annexed to the Treaty on the European Union.
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- 46 Council Decision 2012/174/CFSP of 23 March 2012 amending Joint Action 2008/851/CFSP on a European Union military operation to contribute to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast, OJ L 89 of 27 March 2012.
- 47 Exchange of Letters between the EU and the Government of Kenya on the conditions and modalities for the transfer of persons suspected of having committed acts of piracy and detained by the EU-led naval force (EUNAVFOR), and seized property in the possession of EUNAVFOR, from EUNAVFOR to Kenya and for their treatment after such transfer [2009] OJ L79/49; Council of the European Union, Conclusions (Foreign Affairs), 26 April 2010, point 24.
- 48 Human Rights Council, "Universal Periodic Review Working Group Report: Kenya," 15th Session, 2010 A/HRC/15/8; TRIAL (Swiss Association against impunity), "Submission to the UN Human Rights Committee's consideration of Kenya's third periodic report," 29 July 2011, http://www.trial-ch.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/CAJ/Kenya/Kenya_-_Alternative_report_to_the_Human_Rights_Committee_-_July_2011.pdf, accessed 15 December 2012.
- 49 We developed this argument best in Sánchez-Barrueco, "The promotion," 159–62 see also Jean-Paul Pierini, "Aprehension, arrest, detention and transfer of suspected pirates and armed robbers within the legal framework of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP): the 'mantra' of the existence of a proper legal base." *I quaderni europei* 29 (2011), 5, http://www.lex.unict.it/cde/quadernieuropei/giuridiche/29_2011.pdf, accessed 15 December 2012.
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- 51 House of Lords (European Union Committee), "Combating Somali Piracy: the EU's Naval Operation Atalanta", Report with Evidence, 12th Report of Session 2009–10, 14 April 2010, HL Paper 103, points 22–9.
- 52 Council Decision 2010/96/PESC of 15 February 2010, OJUE (2010) L44 of February 19.
- 53 Katja Grekula, "Working as a gender advisor in the ET training mission in Somalia," in Tuomas Koskenniemi (ed.), *Security Sector Reform – Beyond Civil-Military Cooperation*, Finnish Defence Forces International Centre, FINCENT Publications Series 1/2010: 82–6, http://www.fincen.fi/attachments/gallery/Security_Sector_Reform.pdf, last accessed 30 November 2012.
- 54 House of Lords, *European Defence Capabilities: Lessons from the Past, Signposts for the Future*, HL Paper 292 (2012).
- 55 Council Decision 2012/389/CFSP of 16 July 2012 on the European Union Mission on Regional Maritime Capacity Building in the Horn of Africa (EUCAP NESTOR), OJ L 187 of 17 July 2012.
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SECTION FOUR

Reimagining
intervention—must
history repeat
itself in Somalia?

11

Identity, stability, and the Somali state: Indigenous forms and external interventions

Michael Walls and Steve Kibble

Lessons for a legitimate Somali state?

Commentators frequently cite the Somali areas in the Horn of Africa as paradigmatic examples of state collapse, insurgent activity, and conflict between “traditional,” external and Islamist elements. While there are many instances of these phenomena, this generalization does not hold true throughout. A slightly deeper analysis notes regional differences and particularly the successes of Puntland and Somaliland in securing greater stability than is present in the south.

In recent years, this alternate perspective has gained a growing following, with Somaliland in particular presented as an example of successful, indigenous state-building against the chronic failure of externally sponsored initiatives in the south. Accompanying this interest is a growing body of literature concerned with examining Somaliland for lessons that might be applied in Somalia, the Horn of Africa, and perhaps further afield. As important and warranted as such endeavors are, discernment is needed in drawing conclusions: experiences in the area provide rich but complex and sometimes contradictory bases for reflection on the linkages between hypothesis and reality.

Regrettably, in spite of the evident complexities and the danger that overly simple conclusions might prove destructive, there remains a tendency for analyses to fall into just that trap. Somali conflict and state-building tends to be treated in terms of polar opposites: the fundamentalist Islamist militia of Al Shabaab is contrasted with the more mercenary forces of “warlords” and those of the internationally supported transitional and, now, post-transitional government; state consolidation in Somaliland, and to a lesser extent Puntland, is contrasted with failure in the south, and so on. Even more constructive analyses of Somali political practice sometimes rely on generalizations that risk concealing genuine lessons on the potentials for legitimate Somali state formation.

Looking again at Somaliland, they have indeed achieved much in building on local initiative and resources. Conversely, it is hard to argue that external interventions in the south have served as anything other than a cumulatively malign influence over the long term. But it is not sufficient to conclude that “Somalis will succeed if only they are left to themselves.” Reality is far more complex and nuanced than formalistic readings allow. In reality external intervention has, on occasion, achieved significant success in breaking through roadblocks where local negotiations have stalled. In fact, Somali custom explicitly creates space in which outsiders may assume constructive roles, with such activities periodically playing a decisive part in resolving significant difficulties. Indeed, it is notable that, as successful as they have been, the indigenous patterns that provided the basis for both Puntland and Somaliland’s achievements remain incomplete and, despite mythologies to the contrary, continue to rely on external inputs from both non-Somali and diasporic agents. In Somaliland’s case, the successful staging of presidential elections in 2010 saw external powers grant a degree of greater legitimacy to the state there. That process appeared to gather force with the announcement of a new policy in which the US government proposed to engage Somaliland and Puntland governments “aggressively” in the future,¹ and the United Kingdom and some other (generally northern European) governments have also increased formal ties with Somaliland. Whether this enhanced level of engagement ultimately proves constructive or not remains an open question, though there is little question that donors, foreign governments, and other external actors *could* play a positive role if they exercise discernment and caution.

Conversely, the pattern in which ill-conceived, if well-meaning, external engagements in Somali affairs exacerbate state collapse rather than resolving it, has become so sustained over the past two decades that it is surely necessary to approach the issue with considerable care, avoiding Manichean polarities. Serial failure on the part of outsiders demands fresh thinking and

indicates the complexity of the issues faced and the consequences of error. In attempting to understand that dynamic, it is useful to consider some of the key roles played by different external actors, along with a few of the striking paradoxes which pertain. Both in recognition of the significance of successes in Somaliland and in an effort to permit some depth to the analysis, this chapter will use Somaliland as a focus for analysis, albeit within a wider social, cultural, and political context. We will start with a review of some of the apparent contradictions that afflict much contemporary analysis, before briefly reviewing a number of key actors and institutional arrangements that have played a part in Somaliland's ongoing national political project. We draw our insights from a combination of disciplines—social anthropology, political economy, and historical and contemporary political writing—as well as practical development and advocacy work in and concerning Somaliland and the wider region.

State-Building: Paradoxes and foundations

While still internationally unrecognized, the Republic of Somaliland has achieved notable success in establishing a stable system of governance that draws on customary and understood procedures for conflict resolution, while thus far successfully negotiating the exigencies of contemporary nation-state politics. In expanding on these observations, the obvious task is to tease out some of the factors which have contributed to Somaliland successes. Some argue that the principal foundation for these achievements lies in the fact that the northern areas, including Somaliland, tend to support the most socially and culturally homogeneous Somali communities. Indeed, most northerners have, until recently, been pastoralists as the lack of major riverine areas combined with semi-arid climatic conditions have historically precluded widespread horticulture, thus also discouraging sedentarization.

By contrast, the southern Somali areas include the two riverine valleys: those of the Shebelle and the Jubba. Some of those indigenous to the area are identified as Bantu, while others are described as Sab minorities. Distinction is also made between Somali-speakers and those who speak a distinct dialect known as *af-Maaymaay* or *af-Maay*. The presence of the two great rivers has also meant that settled horticulture has long been a more viable livelihood option in some southern localities than in most northern areas, while extensive links with trading networks based in Zanzibar and the Gulf have historically brought many more outsiders to the southern ports of Mogadishu, Kismayo, and Merka than to their northern equivalents.

These observed contrasts provide the basis for the first apparent contradiction. The suggestion is that southern diversity and a society fractured between sedentarized agriculturalists and mobile pastoralists left people in those areas ill-equipped to develop the sense of common identity and cultural understanding necessary for the establishment of a viable nation-state. Meanwhile, the remarkable linguistic, cultural, and religious homogeneity of those in the north is presented in the same account as providing the basis for stability. Certainly, the conception that strong, shared sociocultural institutions facilitate the emergence of a viable state concords with a Gellnerist view of nationalism as a basis for state formation.² However, the opposite argument would hold that it was actually the trade-based city-states that were stronger in the south that had the best chance of enabling the political accommodations necessary for the establishment of a sustainable state. This understanding follows a line consistent with that of Charles Tilly who noted that state formation in Europe occurred not in spite of "continuous aggressive competition for trade and territory"³ among more densely settled, changing and diverse nascent states, but because of it.⁴ Another oft-cited basis for contemporary analysis of northern stability lies in the differing roles played by the colonial powers. The British policy of "indirect rule" and their general disinterest in holding the area as a full colony resulted in a relatively "light" colonial touch, leaving customary institutions intact (although one is always aware of the degree to which "tradition" mutates and undergoes processes of invention and reinvention in these circumstances). This is contrasted with Italian colonial intervention in the south and northeast where aggressive colonization meant suppression of the indigenous population and active efforts to establish an Italian administration managed by Italian administrators on modernist precepts.

The reasoning then follows that long-standing and homogenous cultural institutions provide the basis for Somaliland successes, while southern diversity and colonial meddling undermined the same processes. By and large, it would follow that things should be left to Somalis as much as possible, with external support simply bolstering local traditions. This view does retain a certain logic and presents a simple elegance that is enormously attractive to busy policymakers. However, it suffers from a fundamental lack of depth. Somali tradition is dynamic, and different facets within the institutional context actually play against each other in unexpected directions if the subtleties are ignored. This complexity must be recognized if external and domestic approaches to state-building are not to continue to exacerbate rather than alleviate Somali problems. By definition, the task of gaining a robust understanding of the complexities remains both difficult and vital. The practical implications of this

polarization in analyses are evident when the paradoxes outlined above are examined in slightly more detail:

- 1 At independence in 1960, following the Gellnerist view outlined, Somalis were considered to have had a better chance than most Africans of forming a viable state, as the majority shared religion, language, and ethnicity. The collapse of the Somali state disproved that prediction, giving rise to the rubric that Somalis are too anarchic to form a central state. Somaliland has, in its turn, given the lie to that assumption;⁵
- 2 Drawing on a policy position that derives from a commitment to retaining the borders of the immediate postindependence unification, Somalia essentially remains a failed state with international recognition while Somaliland possesses the attributes of a functioning state yet lacks international recognition;
- 3 The durability of this commitment to the idea of a viable Somalia in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary has meant that successive transitional governments have received lavish donor support for the institutionalization of the instruments of law and order and state-based public administration in spite of the fact they have signally failed to achieve such legitimacy, while Somaliland has largely pursued its own path with low levels of external funding yet has achieved much greater levels of popular acceptance and stability;
- 4 Both Somalia and Somaliland seek traditional state sovereignty, yet the economies of both continue to be dominated by relationships operating outside the parameters of the formal system, centrally involving a relatively enormous and geographically extremely dispersed diaspora;⁶
- 5 Within Somaliland, democratization is driven to a significant extent by the belief that it will enhance the case for international recognition. While there is probably validity in that view, the result is that, as impressive as Somaliland's elections and democratizing initiatives are, the process is to some degree instrumental and motivated by a foreign policy goal toward which little apparent progress has been made; and
- 6 In parallel with the previous point, although Somaliland has a very good legal case for recognition, successive governments have not always demonstrated a clear understanding of the need for a

strategic, coordinated political, and diplomatic program in support of that case. The government installed in elections in July 2010 lost no time in proclaiming its commitment to changing this, seeking a more dynamic approach to gaining greater legitimacy in the eyes of the outside world. They have indeed pursued a more nuanced approach than the somewhat “take it or leave it” attitude of past regimes. As has been noted, the shift in United States and United Kingdom engagement with Somaliland provides some indication that this change is proving effective, though the long-term nature of that effect remains unclear.

These evident contradictions continue to stifle more nuanced discussion on Somali issues—both within the concentric rings of Somali discourse and in the parallel world of non-Somali analysis. In addition, the dominant discourse surrounding nation-state democracy in the Somali context can be seen as failing to demonstrate an adequate understanding of a number of key historic factors. Among these are the effect of the “securocratic” legacy of Siad Barre and the dynamic and frequently contradictory relationships between diaspora, international civil society, and the domestic polity in a wide range of areas, including, for example, female incorporation into the political system and an understanding of the sophistication of customary kinship systems. In theoretical terms there must be an account that deals with these along with the interplay of multiple identities, allegiances, and territoriality.

One of the notable misunderstandings relates to the role played in Somali society by Islam. Religious identity has long served as a foundation for calls for unity which, for many Somalis, sits in contrast to the “conservative” and socially divisive forces of clan affiliation. So, while many today suggest that Islam represents a reversion to a fundamentalist conservatism that is destroying the potential for state consolidation, Somali history tends rather more to accord Islam an unashamedly “modernizing” function. It is therefore no accident that prominent leaders including, in the 1920s, the Sayyid Mahamed Abdille Hasan (known disparagingly by the British as the “Mad Mullah”) employed Islam as a basis for fundamental social reorganization which aimed to subordinate kinship identity to religious.⁷ A half century later, Siad Barre, while attempting to build a secular state around his somewhat incoherent brand of “scientific socialism,” also made explicit use of this duality, calling in one notable speech for the abolition of “tribalism” while upholding “. . . the Islamic religion, if necessary, by all the force and strength we have.”⁸

These traditions challenge the contemporary suggestion that Somaliland’s success is based on the integrity of customary, clan-based social structures, while failure in the south can be traced to the degradation of the same. It would

probably be more accurate to suggest that the significance of the Somaliland case lies in the success of its people in negotiating a system that accommodates clan complexities, utilizing them for peace while moving on from sustained conflict. Our argument is that, in spite of superficial evidence to the contrary, Somaliland's success in state-building actually accords more with Tilly's view that the state only becomes a viable option when conflict becomes unaffordable in both human and financial terms. In Somalia it is still unclear whether that point might be reached in the near future. While the post-transitional government that assumed power in mid-2012 has been working hard to establish itself as a viable and legitimate state power, Kenyan and Ethiopian patronage, in particular, has continued to support deep divisions over the administration of subsidiary areas, including, for example, the nascent Jubbaland state.⁹

It is this condition of reaching a point at which conflict has become "unaffordable" rather than preexisting homogeneity that provides the starting point for successful accommodation between groups. This accommodation is all the more remarkable in Somaliland for the lessons of history which suggest that, while kinship traditions offer mechanisms for the resolution of resource conflict, they tend to militate against national unity. Calls for nationalistic unity have more often sprung from religious quarters, again underlining the novelty of the predominantly secular nature of the state that is emerging in Somaliland. In the south, the Islamist movements of the past few years should initially have been seen as holding out the potential for meaningful progress toward long-term stability rather than being a force for anarchy or disintegration. It was the failure of many outside Somali communities to understand this disjunction that led to externally-sponsored interventions in support of clan-affiliated militia against religious movements, particularly including the Islamic Courts Union (ICU).

Customary bases for external intervention

If we are to advance this argument, we must review the institutional context in which the noted contradictions exist and within which conflicts are perpetuated or resolved and peace is built. More specifically, this chapter seeks to identify institutional bases that offer some potential for positive external involvement. Indeed, the Somaliland experience in peacebuilding and state formation is already illustrative of many roles that can be played by outsiders both in resolving issues and in helping to establish agreements on how future conflict and governance issues will be resolved.

We first look briefly at the roles played from time to time by the various agents who have customarily acted as "external" interveners in conflicts or

negotiations: mediating “elders” within a clan or subclan, mediatory groups from an uninvolved clan, and women. Later, we will consider instances in which those outside the clan system altogether have been able to draw on these precedents in a manner that has enabled them to play constructive roles.

Defining the external actor

The distinction between internal and external actors is, of course, not always clear, and the suggestion above that elders, mediators, and women might be seen as external further hints at the fluidity of such divisions. Groups or individuals who are “external” in one context may be seen as “internal” in another.

However, it is possible to broadly define a number of actors who from time to time intervene as external agents in activities that facilitate or support peace, state-building and the like. A comprehensive list would be long indeed, but this chapter will focus specifically on a smaller number, including:

- Mediators within a clan whose engagement concerns a conflict in which they personally have not been involved;
- Mediators from uninvolved clans; and
- Somali women;
- Members of the “international (diplomatic) community,” including NGOs, foreign governments, and multilateral agencies; and
- The large and scattered Somali diaspora.

Customary roles tend to revolve around the first three categories, with the diasporic contribution cutting across (or informed by) norms pertaining to clan and gender. Noncustomary outsiders have long struggled to identify and occupy a space within which constructive engagement is possible, yet the Somaliland case does offer some instances in which such a role has been possible.

Somaliland provides rich evidence of the potential for positive action by each of these agents, and we argue that the pragmatism of customary norms permits space for such actors to engage constructively, drawing on similar customary yet flexible principles.

It is now worth considering the institutional bases for external engagement in somewhat greater detail.

Elders as mediators

Traditionally, intervening external agents have tended to be male Somalis, representing kinship (clan) groups who have not been involved in a given conflict or dispute. Custom permits male actors in this position to attempt to mediate between conflicting groups, achieving success only if the conflictual parties are willing to recognize the legitimacy of those efforts. Intervening males may be widely considered to be elders (*oday*), although, conversely, successful mediation can also provide a path to that status. In essence, customary practice allows space both for those within conflictual kinship groups and those with no lineage-affiliation to a given conflict to take their chances. Either as neighbors to a conflict, or as members of a subclan so afflicted, the individuals or groups concerned are seen to hold a sufficient interest in peace to motivate such intervention.

Social relations in Somali society are based on a system of customary contract known as *xeer*, adjudicated by ad-hoc committees of elders, assembled as required. The fundamental contracting unit is the *mag* group, the members of which act as guarantors of the good behavior of fellow members, on pain of having to share the burden of compensation on any member's behalf should they be adjudged the guilty party in a dispute.

Each *mag* group is represented by one or more informal leaders or '*aaqil*'; a term which is sometimes translated as "chief," but which is primarily an influencing, negotiating, and chairing role, rather than one which grants the incumbent authoritative power. During the time of the Somaliland Protectorate and the Italian colony and trusteeship, both colonial administrations attempted to co-opt the role by paying a stipend to '*aaqils* or their equivalent in return for work on behalf of the colonial administration. A similar practice had earlier been employed on a more limited basis by Egyptian administrators, and quite likely before that.¹⁰ It was also continued and adapted by subsequent Somali governments. This resulted in a burgeoning number of '*aaqils*, and also the politicization of the role in some instances. However, in line with aforementioned thinking, these external influences were relatively less pronounced in the north than in the south, where the Italian administration had much grander plans for the "modernization" of their colony.

There is a clear hierarchy of male traditional roles in which the '*aaqil* is only one, but all retain an emphasis on negotiation, mediation, and facilitation. It is therefore misleading to describe Somali society as either acephalous on the one hand or employing a formal hierarchy of power on the other, without further context. There are certainly differentiated levels of influence and respect, and these carry great weight. Typically, the customary system is also

heavily biased against individuals who assume too much direct authority in the eyes of their respective communities, while according considerable autonomy to those who act as mediators or facilitators. In hierarchical terms, a number of titled elders sit at levels above *'aaqil*, and the terms used can differ slightly from clan to clan. Generally, though, *garaad*, *ugaas*, *boqor*, and *suldaan* all refer to positions of greater seniority than the *'aaqil*.

Somali political institutions tend to display a "lack of any clearly defined authority roles,"¹¹ and even without the noted differences in colonial influence, that tendency is more pronounced in the north than in the south.¹² Even in southern areas, as Virginia Luling notes, ". . . the loose form of political organization . . . allows a higher degree of authority to clan elders than in the north, [but still] does not generally give permanent power to any fixed hereditary office"¹³

When disputes arise, the onus falls first on the head of the families involved if between two such units, or else on the *'aaqil* of affected *mag* groups to attempt to negotiate a settlement. If the problem proves intractable, a mediator might step in. Any such mediating individual or group would need to command the respect of the protagonists; a task made easier if that mediator is seen as "independent." Any individual or group who assumes such a mediatory role may be referred to as a *guurti*, a term that has more recently been institutionalized and, many would argue, politicized in the Somaliland context through its application to the upper house of the Parliament.¹⁴ The essential etymology of the term, though, refers more generally to the necessary wisdom of any person or group responsible for mediating disputes.

There is also room for additional mediation at the instigation of an even more loosely defined group of respected individuals formed with the specific purpose of mediating particularly difficult conflicts. The generic term *ergo*, or simply "delegation," is sometimes used in this context.

Somali customary law is based on sets of principles. It is not rigid, as there is explicit recognition that too great a level of specificity in law will fail to provide the flexibility necessary for dealing with the vagaries of day-to-day life. Those principles have evolved around the dual focus of protection of the rights of the individual to life, liberty, and property as well as the individual's commitment to family and clan.¹⁵ In the context, the related processes of adjudication, mediation, negotiation, and consensus-building carried out with a commitment to transparency and in good faith are the critical mechanisms for the application of recognized principles. Rhetoric and oratory are prized skills, as the ability to persuade others of the veracity of an argument will contribute directly to the achievement of a more advantageous agreement.

In Somaliland, the intervention of external agents, drawing on the traditions and norms described, have played an important role since the fall of the

Siad Barre regime early in 1991. Most notably, when the interim military administration of President 'Abdirahmaan "Tuur" became bogged down in a protracted conflict between competing subclans of the Isaaq clan family. On that occasion, it was mediating groups from non-Isaaq clans (who were not themselves involved in the conflict) who enabled a resolution to be found. That mediating group was drawn from the Dhulbahante and Gadabuursi clans, both of whom had previously been seen as antagonistic to the anti-Siad resistance of the Isaaq. They stepped in and chaired a conference in the town of Sheekh between the warring groups. The Gadabuursi then hosted and chaired a major conference of all the northern clans in their town of Boorama over 4 months in 1993: a conference which oversaw the transfer of power from Tuur's military administration to an elected civilian head of state along with the adoption of a constitutional "national charter." Similar patterns are evident throughout the period since 1991, with external agents intervening in conflict, hosting conferences, and facilitating agreement on often complex governance arrangements.¹⁶

Women as "external" agents

Women, too, play a role deriving from their perceived status as "outsiders" with their externality arising from the perception that a woman's allegiance is split between kinship and marriage. This allows many women to serve as a communicative channel between their affiliated kinship and marriage groups if necessary, but without a presumption of full loyalty to either.¹⁷

This bridging role exists both in formalized situations and on an ad hoc basis when needed. As is the practice in most societies, one way (though by no means the only one) of formally consolidating exogenous alliances is through marriage. Sometimes this is explicitly intended as settlement of past grievances, in which case it is known as *godob-reeb tagabadhaha*, or literally, "the leaving behind of a grudge through women."¹⁸ More informally, marriage also offers a useful means of confirming or consolidating friendly relations between groups.

Whatever the level of formality, women can consequently act as agents who are sufficiently removed from a given conflict to assist with communication and with the provision of logistical support. Repeatedly, female interviewees, in discussing their role in Somaliland's peacebuilding, comment on the importance of their commitment to sewing police uniforms, carrying messages between opposing clan groups, and cooking and providing for peace conferences.¹⁹

In line with changing dynamics and a growing awareness of gender politics, in part derived from time spent in the diaspora and in relations with international civil society, we have encountered strong evidence of a growing expectation of a more direct role for women in the political space. This arises both from women themselves, and also in some cases from Somali men.

Non-Somali “outsiders”

Each of the instances of external engagement to this point refers to the space available to Somalis themselves to act as conciliatory outsiders in conflict or postconflict situations. Our argument in this chapter is that Somali practice also permits non-Somalis to play constructive roles in that context. Before commenting in greater detail on such instances, though, it is worth briefly returning to one further element in long-standing custom which we believe underlines the space for constructive external engagement. When conflict occurs, there are clearly understood principles that govern the conduct of war (*heerkabiri-ma-geydada*). These rules center on a principle captured in the Somali name for the rules themselves: *biri-ma-geydo*, which is translated by some as “immune (or ‘spared’) from the spear.”²⁰ The principle here is that mediators acting in good faith, religious scholars, women, and those who are elderly or frail must be protected from any fighting.²¹

These principles open a customary avenue for the intervention (and protection) of those engaging in mediation efforts; a position that could conceivably be extended to non-Somalis should they be seen as respected and appropriately informed in the context of the intervention. Were a constructive redefinition of “conflict” extended to the political realm, then it could be argued that the protection accorded to mediators in physical confrontation should also be available to those playing an equivalent role in political stand-offs.

Just as those from neighboring clan groups can be seen as holding sufficient interest in supporting conflict resolution and the bases for sustainable peace, the principle should be available to neighboring countries, and to those with some other distinct interest in Somali stability. In that respect, there must be strong cultural support for understanding the motivation for mediating and supportive intervention aimed at assisting in state-building and socio-political cooperation for those with an interest in such outcomes. Where direct military intervention is predictably seen as a hostile effort to dominate Somali society, modest and proactive engagement that seeks to understand and work with Somali socio-political institutions would be unlikely to arouse the same negative reaction.

This is not a role that has been well defined in practice. A handful of international NGOs and individuals working for donors and multilateral institutions do fit the description but most of those engaged in Somali projects do not. The implication is that, for non-Somalis to establish the legitimacy for their own involvement they must demonstrate a long-term commitment and a depth of understanding of the specific context. In addition, they must demonstrate an integrity and strength of will that accords with the traits prized in Somali society.

As it is, non-Somali actors are instead widely vilified for their role. INGOs, foreign states, and multilateral bodies are seen as complicit in conceiving and executing interventions that have worsened the problems they were designed to address. This perspective emphasizes the tendency for non-Somali agents to presume the validity of external models (e.g., representative democracy) while often holding little awareness of Somali discourse or practice.

External intervention: Instances of success and failure

Again, the patterns of external intervention and insight into the application of the principles discussed thus far can best be illustrated through selected examples.

As noted, it has become axiomatic for many commentators that external intervention in state-building in Somalia has done more harm than good, and certainly there are numerous examples of specific actions that can be cited to support that position. In fact, there are instructive instances both supporting and refuting the case. This chapter does not seek to enumerate those occurrences exhaustively, but it is worth relating a few, noting in each the elements that support or undermine space for constructive external engagement.

Intervention gone wrong

An obvious starting point is the protracted series of negotiations that led to the 2004 Mbagathi agreement creating the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia, which continued to receive international support until it was replaced in 2012 by the “post-transitional” government. The donor community made a fateful decision to abandon the “building blocks” approach that had previously received support as a means of building a decentralized governance

system and consequently fostering the support of local communities. As late as 1999, the argument was put that "... any unitary Somali state is improbable for the indefinite future" and that a localized process of state-building might be possible "... if it can operate without external interference, and can get a degree of sympathetic and careful international support [which is] not yet apparent."²² However, when the Transitional National Government (TNG) was formed in 2000, it excluded the leaders of these "blocks" and effectively represented a shift away from the earlier decentralized approach. By the time their mandate expired in 2003, the TNG had failed to gain support beyond the narrowest geographic confines, but the new IGAD-sponsored talks in Kenya (first in Eldoret and then Mbagathi) continued to engage militia and business leaders on the basis that they held the "real" power. This therefore ignored more legitimate local power structures in favor of a "real-politik" engagement with those in power. The TFG that resulted in 2004, supposedly a government of national unity, also failed to win broad support.²³ Successive variants on that basis have similarly and serially failed, with the "post-transitional" regime that has been in place since mid-2012 again struggling to establish itself as any more legitimate than its immediate predecessors.

While the venality and incompetence of many of the individuals involved in these attempts to form a government has been a major factor in their failure, the role of external agents, and in particular donors, in supporting a process that so signally failed to build on local sources of legitimacy is also highly significant. Essentially, international support propped up individuals widely considered to be attempting to draw too much individual authority to themselves, against more consensus-based alternatives. While the "building blocks" approach may have moved more slowly than was palatable to the political and funding cycles of donors and neighbors, it nevertheless held greater potential for success.

Another pertinent example was the US intervention in support of "Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism" (ARPCT). US funding of \$100,000–150,000 a month was reportedly provided to ARPCT to finance militia action against the ICU in 2006 in the hope of shoring up support for the TFG (in which many ARPCT members were Ministers, MPs etc.). The result of this intervention was the polar opposite. It galvanized the Somali population in opposition to an intervention against both clan and religious traditions that provided support to a hated group of authoritarian militia leaders. The ICU quickly prevailed over the Alliance, driving them from Mogadishu and introducing a period of some 6 months in which ICU dominance was clear, if unpopular in some of its dimensions, and relative peace prevailed.²⁴ Powers, including the Ethiopians and the United States, were so alarmed at this turn

of events that the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia proceeded with broad, if in some cases tacit, international support.

There is also a danger that, in spite of their best intentions, outsiders become convenient scapegoats for domestic disputes. The potential for this result in a damaging engagement was vividly demonstrated in Somaliland in 2009. An ambitious voter registration program became mired in a welter of accusations and counter-accusations between political leaders, the National Electoral Commission and the international NGO (and conduit for donor financing), Interpeace. For some influential and mostly domestic commentators, it was the very involvement of Interpeace that caused these problems. This opinion was expressed vociferously and in spite of compelling and readily available evidence of widespread fraud that had itself been perpetrated by domestic political actors. On a number of occasions, Interpeace was presented as an outsider who should have prevented domestic fraud from occurring. This set an impossibly ambitious expectation for which Interpeace had no mandate, and in which it consequently and self-evidently “failed.”²⁵ Others saw outside involvement as *prima facie* evidence of conspiracy.²⁶ The electoral commission of the day accused the most senior Interpeace staff member in Somaliland of “inciting the opposition,” and the government expelled him from the country.²⁷ In the end, a very difficult situation was rescued, and the rehabilitation of Interpeace’s role in Somaliland is also worth noting. Our view is that Interpeace was in fact functioning very effectively within a demanding remit, and simply became embroiled in a dispute not of its making. Ultimately the voter register was used in a successful election, and many more sane commentators applauded Interpeace’s role. This outcome eventuated as a result of the persistence of both Interpeace and their Somaliland supporters. The temptation to view events as indicative of Somali incapacity to reach the necessary political accommodations was strong, and it is to the credit of those who were attempting to engage constructively with those problems that the situation was eventually reversed. In this, several parties played a positive role: most particularly Interpeace itself, key donors, and civil society groups within Somaliland. That is a success story which is related in the following section.

External successes

Before returning to the Interpeace example, though, it is valuable to consider some earlier successes for external intervention.

Weakened by earlier conflict, by 1992 Somaliland President Abdirahman Tuur had hit an impasse. He was unable to gain a quorum for a meeting

of the SNM Central Committee as he was effectively in conflict with his colleagues.²⁸ In an effort to resolve the situation, he made the unexpected decision to ask a group of elders (*guurti*) to convene a meeting to resolve the conflict.²⁹ In the process he allowed that resolution to be taken out of his hands, and as a result lost the presidency. However, by turning to a facilitative group of mediators drawn from all the largest northern clans and who were removed from the source of the conflict, his decision enabled real progress. It is highly significant in this regard that the group was actively supported by leading figures from two of the major non-Isaaq clans, the Dhulbahante and the Gadabuursi. This initiative on Tuur's part effectively brought a group popularly known as "the" *guurti* into prominence as a political entity. They consequently assumed responsibility for organizing the next major conference, scheduled to commence early in 1993. As outsiders to the intra-SNM conflicts of the preceding 2 years, the Gadabuursi had offered to host the conference in Boorame, and they played a significant role in organization and facilitation both through the *guurti* and apart from it. Fundraising efforts were intensive, with significant contributions made by diaspora and local communities and business people, as well as some contribution in cash or in-kind from international agencies and NGOs. The *guurti*, elders from each clan, and women's groups were all active in mobilizing the necessary resources. The Boorame community provided accommodation and security, with the 150 official delegates staying and meeting at the Sheekh Ali Jowhar School, then on the outskirts of the town. Between 700 and 1,000 other visitors crowded into Boorame's hotels and guest-houses, stayed with friends or family or were billeted in the households of strangers.

The declared purpose of the conference was to determine the "destiny" of Somaliland, and it agreed a peace charter which dealt with immediate issues relating to the most recent conflict, and a "national charter" to serve as an interim national constitution. These impressive achievements were enabled by a combination of external but clan-based facilitation and logistical support with additional low-key (and minimal) support from non-Somali sources. UNDP supplied air transport for delegates traveling from the eastern regions of Sool and Sanaag (though no cash), while a number of foreign governments, NGOs and faith groups, including the Mennonites, Community Aid Abroad, and the Norwegian, French, and US embassies gave sums of cash for conference organization.³⁰ By channeling this support through existing channels and in a manner that avoided its "politicization," the engagement was constructive and nondisruptive, but still vital.

The role played by women at a national meeting in the town of Sheekh which served to establish the ground for the Boorame conference is instructive in a different way. Again, acting as agents external to the immediate

negotiations—a political process from which women are traditionally excluded in Somali custom—a group of female activists gathered outside the venue, demanding that delegates make meaningful decisions. The women went to the length of barricading the exit from the venue, preventing delegates from leaving the meeting until they had addressed key points. The activist group was specific in demanding that a number of issues be agreed, including the rejection of UNOSOM overtures to Somaliland and the establishment of a domestic police force. Their intervention, although formally external to the decision-making process, was constructive and won concessions.³¹ This instance demonstrates the sometimes bold, even confrontational, nature of a position which can sometimes bear fruit. The women's engagement was not ultimately seen as a recourse to coercion because delegates could almost certainly have over-ridden the barricade if they had chosen to do so. The key factor in this case was the success of the women involved in publicly shaming delegates into acting in the interests of a wider Somaliland community.

Returning to the negative example relating to the 2009 registration of voters, as cited above, that case illustrates both a negative form of external engagement and a positive one. Resolution of the stand-off ultimately came about through a late 2009 agreement on a six-point memorandum. This defused the situation described earlier, which had by then led to violent protest and the deaths of demonstrators. Here the donor group fulfilled a function outlined in brief some months before.³² They simultaneously maintained a strong position on a number of prerequisites for their renewed support for elections while also engaging in supportive diplomacy with UK representatives in particular working through the Ethiopian Deputy Foreign Minister. Using this combination of muscular and supportive diplomacy—not dissimilar if on a different scale to the approach of the women in Sheekh—these external representatives were able to draft a “non-paper”³³ which subsequently reappeared as the draft for a six-point memorandum signed by the key Somaliland stakeholders.³⁴

The common thread here is that, in contrast to the unsuccessful interventions cited above, the successful ones are smaller in scale and build actively on local initiatives. In each case, external funding did not disproportionately dominate, and outsiders did not establish frameworks and deadlines beyond the immediate release of funds. These critical decisions were made by local actors who then had to face their own constituents. External actors did not escape criticism by any means: they were seen as active participants in a contentious process and therefore, for many observers, complicit in bad decisions, and deserving of condemnation. However, by not dominating proceedings as hosts, primary funders, or the deliverers of state-building frameworks, outsiders were able to adjust their positions as events unfolded,

ultimately remaining engaged. The Interpeace example shows the degree to which outsiders remain subject to contextual tides that lie outside their control.

A discussion of external influence in the Somaliland context would hardly be complete without some discussion of the Somali diaspora. As residents, and often citizens, of countries outside the Horn of Africa, diaspora groups must be seen as at least partially removed from the domestic scene. However, many remain active participants in Somaliland, influencing the situation there in diverse and not infrequently contradictory ways. On the one hand, remittances and diasporic networks have been successful in providing productive investment and excellent interpersonal networks. The example provided by the country's tertiary educators, including Amoud University in Boorame, the longest established of them, is illustrative of this point. Fundraising, recruitment and ongoing support have come in large part from an engaged and informed external constituency. On the other hand, the diaspora can be seen to provide a support base that bypasses inter and intragovernmental channels, potentially both weakening them and reducing the accountability of the state to its citizens. Consequently, many politicians see their most influential constituencies as living outside Somaliland. Both ministers and opposition leaders frequently maintain homes outside the country, in some cases spending much of each year in Europe, North America, or the Gulf nations.

Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to set out some of the foundations on which external actors could build a constructive engagement in a process of state formation in a Somali context. We have primarily built our arguments around the Somaliland experience, while attempting to situate these arguments within the wider Somali context.

The perception that outsiders are simply making the Somali situation worse continues to hold sway.³⁵ Certainly, non-Somali involvement from the US military intervention in 1992 under the title Operation Restore Hope through to the 2006 Ethiopian invasion have failed manifestly to address the problems they set out to tackle. The UN-sponsored Djibouti Peace Process resulting in a June 2008 agreement between the TFG and the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia³⁶ was seen as establishing an effective process, but it too failed to win the broad political support needed to achieve real change. Continued international sponsorship of the nominally Mogadishu-based TFG, and since mid-2012, also of the post-transitional government, is seen as evidence that

external involvement in Somalia is counter-productive, and that Somalis should be left to do things themselves (although such arguments ignore the massive human rights abuses that have tended to ensue).

For some commentators—both Somali and non-Somali—the easy corollary is that Somaliland succeeded in the period following 1991 precisely because outsiders were not involved, while Somalia has serially failed because of external engagement. This logic has gained considerable ground in recent years, resulting in a new swing of the pendulum: increasing disillusion with the lack of success of recent interventionist policies is leading to renewed calls for disengagement. In some instances the message is nuanced,³⁷ but the danger is that once again the nuance is lost to the attraction of polarized position-taking.

The argument that “outsiders” should withdraw altogether from engagement springs from sources both Somali and non-Somali, and is employed in a variety of instances. We argue in contradiction that active and informed engagement from external agents is essential if past advances are to be built upon. Indeed, it is a mistake to presume that “outsiders” constitute a single group or that the term should be used only when considering non-Somali agents. The large and active diaspora is itself a diverse set of external groups, while groups or individuals who sit outside a given dispute have long played an essential role in peacemaking within Somali society. Somaliland’s contemporary history provides a useful illustration of these processes, as well as giving some indication of ways in which non-Somalis can also play a positive role.

Experiences in Somaliland cannot provide a “model” for engagement, and at any rate, they remain incomplete and to some degree inconclusive. However, there are valuable lessons that must be learned if the seemingly intractable conflicts in the south are to be alleviated. While it is superficially easy to support calls for international disentanglement in the Somali areas, the reality is that both Somaliland as soon as possible and Somalia in the long term will need to be reintegrated into global political, financial, and logistical networks if the Horn of Africa is to move beyond the current state of failure, or at best marginal success.

While external intervention in its many forms has frequently and unequivocally served as a malign influence in the Somali political sphere over the years, this is not an inevitable state of affairs. Where it builds on existing social structures, supporting and facilitating Somalis in decision-making, utilizing pragmatic customary consensus-building techniques, there is potential for outsiders to make a positive—indeed, vital—contribution.

In fact, we argue that the strong basis for external intervention within Somali tradition can be extended to non-Somali actors and that such engagement can

be constructive if based on a deep understanding of the context in which it must operate and a realistic awareness of the areas in which such outsiders can play a role of that type. Importantly, an effort to identify and build constructive modes of engagement, drawing on a full but pragmatic understanding of tradition and context is essential if Somalis living in the Horn of Africa are to escape the cycles of violence, crisis, blatant corruption, and geopolitical manipulation that have come to typify parts of the area.

The paradoxes cited illustrate the tendency for those with an evident interest in the area to view issues in binary terms. The reality almost always lies between extremes and policy must recognize this, avoiding the pendulum swings that have typified interventions to date.

Somali society has changed enormously through colonialism, years of conflict, phases of rebuilding and periodic, and sometimes sustained, political crisis. There is great urgency to find ways of contributing to that change that harness the considerable potential for future stability and greater integration with global communities. Somalis are inveterate travelers and enjoy a long history of trade and business. These are activities that continue through periods of growth and decline, but all require extensive linkages with a globalizing world. A stable infrastructure and at least a minimal capacity for public administration would help Somalis to address many of the most urgent social and humanitarian problems they face. That situation is already considerably further advanced in Somaliland than elsewhere in the now defunct Republic of Somalia, and it would be perverse not to look to Somaliland for clues on how international engagement might facilitate the process. The peaceful handover of power on 26 July 2010 is illustrative not just of a significant step in advancing African democracy (as compared say to the shotgun power-sharing in Kenya and Zimbabwe) but in the way that a democratizing momentum has become internalized within a changing culture deriving initially from "male pastoral democracy." Problematic local council elections in November 2012, on the other hand highlight the potential for developments to move away from increased stability where they are not managed with care and foresight.

It is critically important that Somalis are able to draw on all sections of society if a stable and reasonably just polity is to be built on the successes that already exist. Women in particular are playing an increasing role in business and social life in general. It is vital that they are also accorded more say in political processes, and there is space to build on the pragmatism that is central to Somali socio-political systems to expand that space. A gendered perspective also offers insight through consideration of women's past contributions as a possible framework for wider external engagement. The massive commitment of Somaliland women in the recent and previous elections, queuing for hours

to vote, of the first female member of the Guurti, and of young women in political campaigning has real implications for such a future enhanced role. In the case of political campaigning, there is an observable phenomenon in which women, freed at least temporarily from restrictive practice, take full advantage of the opportunity to engage enthusiastically within the political domain. Perhaps that points to a potential route, especially if governments are prepared to listen to one of their primary support bases, through which Somaliland's political arena might be further revitalized.

Just as women have historically provided logistical support and influenced policy positions from outside, donors and similar international actors have the potential to exert similar influence. This is perhaps a more difficult proposition, and the potential ill-effect can be seen in the Djiboutian, Ethiopian, and Kenyan conferences (and perhaps, to some degree, those in London and Istanbul in 2012 and 2013). If "facilitation" is taken to mean hosting and funding conferences or meetings, then the potential looms large for that to become a junket for delegates with the incentive to achieve meaningful agreement on complex matters removed by generous arms-length funding. Part of the answer is perhaps to ensure that external funding for such processes does not become too generous, and also that it is tagged to very specific outputs. Equally important, though, is the facilitative role that can be played by individuals and small groups who have a long-term commitment to Somali affairs and sufficient capacity to adjust their commitment—in terms of both time and approach—to accommodate shifts in local context. This is a role that has been played well in Somaliland in recent time not just by scholars (Somali and non-Somali), but also by the likes of Interpeace.

For Somaliland specifically, if they are to continue to follow the democratizing path they have negotiated (with detours) since 1991, international engagement needs to extend beyond current limits. Somaliland has made considerable progress, in which the limited but constructive nature of external involvement has played a significant role. However, it is likely that continued progress will become increasingly difficult if the local population sees no dividend from the stability that has been established. At the least, international actors need to continue to find more creative ways of recognizing those achievements. Even if formal international recognition remains off the table, there nevertheless needs to be some means by which Somaliland is permitted—indeed, encouraged—to engage more fully with international systems. The country desperately needs support for infrastructure projects, including road development while the financial sector, as dynamic as it is, is being held back by a lack of integration with international financial institutions. While email might serve many functions, a postal system is also urgently needed but requires Somaliland to work in with international postal systems.

Politically too, many committed Somalilanders (politicians and others) are eager to understand more about the options for governance and welcome the few opportunities offered to liaise with external organizations such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the like. Currently, also, access to financial resources is constrained by lack of international recognition.

Creative thinking is needed in order that existing links can be expanded and new forms of engagement explored. Such an expansion in international integration will inevitably have a significant impact on future social, economic, and political evolution, for all Somalis, not just those in Somaliland, but throughout the Horn of Africa and further afield.

It is possible that we are now seeing further progress in the transformation of the Somaliland state from a largely securocratic or semi-authoritarian model to one which embraces a fuller breadth of the citizenry, especially women. However, that transition remains incomplete and difficult, and it is vital that a monitoring role for civil society be permitted in order to encourage the consolidation of a form of identity and state that fits with the context. This possible transformation could also have a profound knock-on effect throughout the region as Somaliland engages more with neighbors. For their part, the government installed in 2010 has indicated a commitment to exploring more creative, "halfway house" policies in the quest for full recognition. This is a policy shift that should be encouraged and may bear results in the form of concrete improvements in some of the forms of integration with external actors that we are calling for.

For all the Somali territories, there is the need for new forms of engagement to be allowed to emerge through a creative use of "deep" and culturally understood forms of identity. Somalis must inevitably interact with both benign and malign forms of outside intervention, and it is incumbent on those attempting to support the transition to stable and legitimate representative systems to attempt to comprehend the exigencies involved. Both Somalis and non-Somalis need to understand how the "rules" of such interactions can work toward positive outcomes. Although the Somali lands can appear vulnerable to outside pressure given the weak or nonexistent nature of the state, the reality is usually far from that. Somali social institutions emphasize loyalty and self-sufficiency, and are far more resistant to intrusion than many non-Somali operators realize. This has seen Somalis consistently resist the efforts of outsiders to establish bases for militant Islam, and also to resist military intrusion. Far from a vulnerability to externally imposed "solutions," this underlines the fact that those intrusions will tend to fail unless they seek to build explicitly on Somali custom and work in the interests of Somalis more generally.

Notes

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12

Conclusion

*Gilbert Ramsay and Emma Leonard*¹

The traditional agenda of international affairs—the balance of power among major powers, the security of nations—no longer defines our perils or our possibilities. . . . Now we are entering a new era. Old international patterns are crumbling; old slogans are uninformative; old solutions are unavailing. The world has become interdependent in economies, in communications, and in human aspirations.

HENRY KISSINGER²

For many, news of the Somali famine which followed the East Africa drought of 2011 seemed depressingly familiar. Images of skeletal, dying children, for all their horror and immediacy, were no longer the rallying call that a similar crisis in another East African country, Ethiopia, was to the world television audience in 1984. In a time of seismic political change—Middle Eastern revolutionaries, Western economic collapse, and the accelerating rise of China—the only interest that reporters seemed to find in the human misery that marked Somalia was the hostility of Al Shabaab, the effective power in the worst hit areas, toward the emergency relief efforts of international aid agencies.

And yet, beyond this recurring theme of the contrast between the efforts of international aid agencies to tame the seemingly intractable problems of famine and violence in Somalia, this latest tragedy reveals the complex webs of global interdependence, transnational ideology, and local and international

realpolitik that have shaped the world's response to the current crisis in Somalia. As Michael J. Boyle has described in this volume, Somalia has played the part—both in political practice and political myth—of a testing ground in which states play out their fantasies of political order. The consequence is that Somalia, as a real place with real people, has rarely been seen on its own terms. In the ill-fated American and United Nations ventures of the early 1990s, Somalia was supposed to serve as a showcase for how a “New World Order” of American might, allied to the legitimating right of a United Nations freed from the shackles of Cold War power politics, would seek to alleviate human suffering around the world, even if this meant intervening in the affairs of other states.

As this project unfolded into a classical tragedy of hubris and nemesis, it inspired a quite different but—in its own view—equally universalist dream in the form of the global Islamist movement which would hit its own crescendo with its attacks on the World Trade Center, bringing Somalia's internal struggle for governance (as represented by the rise of the Union of Islamic Courts) into the ambit of the global “war on terror.” The heroic part Al Qaeda has ascribed to itself—in which Al Qaeda operatives are supposed to have played a central role in the notorious “Black Hawk Down” incident, and the rise of Al Shabaab³—is likely to be two parts propaganda to one part fact. Yet, as a narrative capable of inspiring both the global jihadist movement toward yet another “romantic landscape of jihad” and US foreign policy toward reacting to the situation as such, it is a vision which has served, to some extent at least, as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Somalia looms far larger as a security issue for the United States than its material or strategic significance gives it any claim to. Indeed, the strategic fantasies which Somalia seems capable of inspiring seem to be beautifully encapsulated in Osama bin Laden's unlikely observation in one of his speeches that America might be interested in Somalia because it is in scud missile range of Mecca and Medina.⁴

Somalia's protracted collapse has also served as a starting point for muscle flexing from a new generation of aspirant global powers, as the chapters in this volume have chronicled. For the European Union, it has served as a relatively uncontroversial object for a more muscular and unified foreign policy. For Japan, involvement in antipiracy operations has provided a stepping stone away from the isolationism and pacifism imposed upon it since World War II. For China, Somalia fits into its increasingly self-confident projection of power abroad—especially into Africa.

For all of the players, Somalia has not counted on its own terms as much as it has been made representative of their ideas of political order. For Somalia itself, this means that relatively minor problems—such as the role of Al Qaeda

in backing Al Shabaab, or the spill-over effects of piracy—in the Red Sea have been vested with a disproportionate importance.

Piracy off the Horn of Africa, for example, is a problem which seems to be solvable through the adoption of fairly minor changes in the operating procedures of international shipping passing the Somali coast (e.g., through the stationing of armed guards or the use of water cannons). Moreover, as Karl Sandstrom has pointed out in this volume, even potentially effective local initiatives for warning against pirate attacks have tended to be ignored. Within this context, it does not seem unduly cynical to suggest that focus on complex joint naval operations and elaborate wrangling about the applicability of international law and the jurisdictions of national courts in prosecuting captured pirates would seem to have as much to do with states' aspirations toward acting as global police and building multilateral capabilities than the needs of commercial shipping. Similarly, an abortive plot on an Australian army base⁵ or an attack on a cartoonist in Denmark,⁶ instead of being more or less manageable examples of local unrest, are all too easily portrayed as evidence of the malignant reach of a global jihadist threat for which Somalia is both an operational and an ideological hub. In this way, the strength and cohesion of both Al Shabaab and Al Qaeda become the focus of the discourse, even if there is little empirical evidence to support this image.

At the same time, however, in observing how Somalia as a reality "on the ground" has disappeared under the various layers of international, transnational, and global projects, it is important not to turn the idea of "local culture" into yet another romanticized abstraction. As Walls and Kibble have insisted in this volume, Somali culture is not a closed system, shut off from possibilities of outside intervention, but something dynamic and evolving—necessarily responsive to the new contexts in which it finds itself.

And, as the chapters that make up this book have shown, it is clear that, for better or worse, an important part of this context is the global context. To believe that Somalia can simply be hermetically sealed off and its conflict allowed to "burn itself out," seems no less fantastic than the idea that some benign external order can bring peace to the country at the hands of an aid convoy or the barrel of a peacekeeper's gun. Somalia's conflict is globalized for better or worse. It will be for the foreseeable future, and any discussion of how the situation within the country can be improved must surely take account of this reality.

In trying to envisage a better future for Somalia, then, it is necessary to recognize that we are talking not just about a "state failure" in the sense of a collapse of a state's capacity to deliver basic and essential social goods. As outlined in the introduction to this volume, we are also talking about the gap between negative and positive sovereignty.⁷ Somalia, despite being seen as a

“failed state,” is on the international stage treated and (in a more limited way) operates as any other state, with a seat and an ambassador at the United Nations, ambassadors at key countries around the world, and clearly demarcated territory on the world map. It is common to hear that Somalia lacks a government or that it is an ungoverned territory. Neither point is, strictly speaking true. Somalia has had a formal, internationally recognized government since the creation of the TNG in 2000 and, every part of Somalia is, in some sense, governed by *someone*, in certain cases rather successfully.⁸ What is striking in this particular case is the disjuncture between the formal expression of sovereignty at the international level and the varied manifestations of the political order on the ground in Somalia. In order to function as the state the international community recognizes it is this disjuncture that needs to be reconciled.

Moreover, Somalia has varying expressions of statehood, particularly with aspiring quasi states such as Somaliland and Puntland, both of whose ambitions for sovereignty are complicated by opposition at the national and international level. In Somaliland, the conflict is not so much with rival actors in Somalia itself as it is, ultimately, with the international actors—most notably the African Union—who are reluctant to fulfil its aspirations toward statehood. For Puntland, the struggle for statehood may have as much to do with how successfully it rises to the international challenge of piracy (a key concern of the international community) and—some allege still more so—its potential oil and gas resources, as it does with the battles taking place on Somali soil.⁹ For those parts of Somalia dominated by Islamist actors, however much the “real” situation “on the ground” may be about intensely local issues and rivalries, the international dimension of the conflict remains paramount. An end to conflict will not be just about the peace they make with each other, but also the peace they make with the wider world.

Whose peace?

What would “peace” mean in this context? For many, the problem in Somalia is one of peacebuilding: building a sustainable culture of nonviolence and institutions that fairly represent the interests of the Somali people. Much of the existing literature on peacebuilding in Somalia conceives of it as a top-down affair, in which external actors “bring” peace to Somalia. At points, this has turned into neo-imperial readings of how the conflict might be resolved. During the ill-fated UN intervention in 1992, Laura Fincato, an Under-Secretary at the Italian Foreign Ministry, suggested that “Italy might consider taking a trusteeship mandate in Somalia provided that the local population was in favour of it and that the United Nations gave its approval

to an international project.”¹⁰ This focus on top-down peacebuilding has led a series of critiques, most notably from Sandstrom and Walls and Kibble, that have called for a “bottom-up,” or grassroots approach to peacebuilding. This notion of nurturing peace from the “grass roots,” or building from the ground up, is almost certainly a more productive way of producing a lasting solution to conflict, than to think that a “one size fits all” peace can be imposed from above. However, the idea that peace needs to be built at the “grass roots” levels implies that the conflict is locatable in a particular, self-contained community which therefore also must contain within itself the solutions and “constituencies” necessary to create peace. Yet, as we have argued, international and transnational forces have had a significant impact on the current iteration of the Somali civil war.

This seems, as Walls and Kibble’s contribution to this volume strongly implies, to invite a curiously schizophrenic understanding of the role of the outsider. On one hand, it is necessary to see those who intervene in attempts to end conflicts in the role of—at best—interfering busybodies and at worst “wolves in sheep’s clothing,” since they are outsiders to the conflict and therefore have no business with it. And yet, even in the idea that it is after all possible to “nurture” or “support” some elements within the conflict rather than others there seems to remain an implicit belief in the possibility of truly benign intervention. While no intervention is fully benign, there must be some way to reconcile how an actor may have a legitimate stake in the wellbeing of its neighbor and find some way to assist them, without dictates and with respect to the prevailing international norm of sovereignty.

While this sensitive approach to peacebuilding is possible, it is notoriously difficult. Over the last twenty years, the conflict in Somalia has been exacerbated by clumsy, “one size fits all” attempts at imposing peace. As Walls and Kibble have shown in this volume, taking account of the existing spaces for dialogue and intervention within local cultures offers an intriguing way of moving beyond the binary “good” local peacebuilding and “bad” outsider intervention to show how liberal concepts such as democratic representation may be adapted to existing norms and values. Rather, the overarching conceptual lesson seems to be that neither abstract theories about what peace ought to look like, nor concrete discussions about what resources for peacebuilding ought to be nurtured in present day Somalia, are sufficient. There is no single actor who will bring, or resist, peace; rather, there is a broader, and more thinly spread, distribution of agency among the actors involved. In other words, the various actors within Somalia are not merely passive victims of conflict. Each of these actors must understand, engage with, battle, or make peace with the global forces that have an interest in the conflict. Conversely, these global forces are in turn not fully at liberty to shape their interventions in Somalia just as they

like. The US intervention that essentially ended in the Battle of Mogadishu is the most dramatized example of this. With less media spectacle, but perhaps at least as much consequence, Ethiopia also found that there were forces within Somalia that they could not control, in spite of their overwhelming military power.

Possibilities for peace?

Having sketched a picture of the complex and intractable nature of Somalia's ongoing conflict, the ways in which it has become a global concern, and the ways in which global actors are not just disinterested third parties in relation to it, but active parties, it might seem presumptuous to make any suggestions about how things might be better handled. This is especially true given the fluidity of Somalia's politics and the uncertain trajectory of the new government, led by President Mohamed, which was formed in 2012. At the same time, we would like to suggest some conclusions, however tentative, about what—on the basis of the chapters presented here—might be said about how to improve on peacemaking efforts in Somalia so far.

As we have seen, the main focus of the theoretical literature is the level at which any intervention takes place—national-level, top-down approaches versus local-level, “grass roots” approaches. Severine Auterresse, in her meticulous and sweeping study of peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), argues that there the international community misdiagnosed the causes the conflict. International organizations within the DRC focused on national-level conflict, having identified this as the cause of war, rather than the local-level conflicts. While Auterresse acknowledges national-level issues have had a significant impact on the progress toward peace, she argues that the lack of attention given to local-level violence was a crucial flawed in peace building efforts. We see the same dynamic at work in Somalia. While the national-level and international-level issues in Somalia have shaped many of the later years of conflict, there are still significant local-level conflicts that need to be addressed if a lasting peace is to be built. However, the most visible focus of the international community has been on antipiracy efforts and the creation of a national government, which has been supported (both financially and diplomatically) by the international community even when it was essentially a government in exile and therefore clearly not contributing to efforts to build peace within Somalia.

There are many parallels between Auterresse's critiques of the focus on elections within the DRC and the determination to support the TFG in Somalia. Auterresse argued that the relatively rapid organization of the elections in the

DRC (a key concern in many international interventions) did not advance the progress toward peace and in fact that “the elections did not give birth to democracy but instead to a competitive autocracy, a system with relatively competitive elections but autocratic governance in the interim.”¹¹ The process that took place within Somalia was comparatively even worse. Because of the security concerns within Somalia, elections were not even attempted. The TFG was created by negotiations run by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD—a regional intergovernmental organization) in 2004 and 2005. Using the 4.5 formula, the four major clans were represented, with the remaining minorities included in the 0.5. The International Crisis Group argued that this was being used as a substitute for political inclusiveness.¹² Clearly, there were no institutions within Somalia strong enough to act effectively as a check on the TFG, although the weakness of the TFG itself and the ongoing conflict situation meant that the leaders of the TFG were constrained in their ability to create an autocracy within Somalia.

Auterresse also argues that the focus on institutions and the creation of a government takes resources away from issues that could have been used more effectively to promote peacebuilding.¹³ In Somalia, between 2000 and 2011, the TNG and then the TFG received a total of \$308 million in bilateral aid,¹⁴ and US\$2.6 billion in official development assistance from the World Bank between 2000 and 2008.¹⁵ The result was a government crippled by incompetence, infighting, and corruption that never managed to govern or control all, or even significant portions, of the territory in Somalia. Just as was the case with the DRC, it would seem as though this money could have been better spent working within Somalia facilitating some of the local peacebuilding initiatives described by Kibble and Walls in this volume.

The third point that Auterresse makes is that, far from ending the violence, the organization of elections may actually have helped to exacerbate it directly. As Auterresse observes, “bottom-up conflict was, in fact, the main reason why violence continued during the transition, elections increased violence in several provinces, Congolese officers and soldiers resisted the security-sector reform so vigorously, and foreign militias continued to thrive in the Congo.”¹⁶ Within Somalia, the creation of the TFG was an example of the same dynamics at work. Although there were not country-wide elections, the process of creating the TFG created new conflicts and exacerbated old ones, while layering intrigue concerning Somalia’s traditional rival, Ethiopia, on top of already tense clan divisions. The creation of the TFG was strongly supported and facilitated by the Ethiopian government, which was increasingly concerned that Islamists were gaining control of its predecessor, the TNG. The fact that power was then concentrated in a pro-Ethiopian cabinet was not lost on the Somali people,¹⁷ raising concerns that Ethiopia, Somalia’s traditional enemy,

had undue influence over internal Somali affairs. New conflicts were created by the selection of the 80 cabinet posts, as President Abdillahi Yusuf used divide-and-rule tactics in an effort to cement his position. The Habar Gedir Ayr subclan (the clan of the TNG president, Abdiqasim Salad Hassan) found itself marginalized under the new regime. This Ayr subclan controlled important trade routes and territory within southern Somalia, and also produced some of the top Islamist leaders,¹⁸ which no doubt contributed to Ethiopia's wish to see them marginalized within the new government. However, this seemed to backfire as the disparate Islamist groups joined together under the banner of the Islamic Courts.¹⁹

Another conflict was created in 2005 when two rival camps emerged within the TFG. One of the issues that caused this split was where the new Somali government would be based. At its creation, the TFG was based in Nairobi but, under pressure from Kenya, it was due to move to Somalia. One faction, led by President Yusuf, argued that Mogadishu was too unstable to host the government and that a temporary capital should be set up in Jowhar and Baidoa. However, the other faction was led by politicians from, and based in, Mogadishu, who fought the idea of a temporary capital away from Mogadishu, as they saw this as an attempt to marginalize their influence. When the TFG did eventually move to Somalia, both Mogadishu and Baidoa were experiencing renewed conflict, meaning that Jowhar was the only option. The Mogadishu politicians then refused to travel to the new capital.

As Sandstrom brings out clearly in his chapter, another problem has been the often huge number of agencies and NGOs present within a post-conflict state. Coordination becomes difficult. At best, this is simply a duplication of efforts by the interveners. At worst though, the interveners actually have conflicting goals, which can then create more problems than they solve. Sandstrom, in his accounts of interviews with ordinary people in Somaliland, also demonstrates how a top-down approach to peacebuilding, a one-size-fits-all approach, actually causes suspicion of the motives of the NGOs and UN agencies. This again resonates with findings from the DRC²⁰ and Sri Lanka²¹ that demonstrate NGOs often do not understand the local complexities of a conflict situation, and sometimes view local-level conflicts as beyond their purview.

Ideally of course, the solution—as Auterresse advocates in demanding that “policy makers should revise their approach to local peacebuilding”²²—would be to reform these organizations and UN agencies so as to make them more dependent on local staff and more responsive to the nuances of local situations. Indeed, there have been moves in this direction. In 2006 the United Nations established the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, designed to play “a unique role in (1) bringing together all of the relevant

actors, international donors, the international financial institutions, national governments, and troop contributing countries; (2) marshalling resources, and (3) advising on and proposing integrated strategies for postconflict peacebuilding and recovery and where appropriate, highlighting any gaps that threaten to undermine peace.”²³

Whether the international community, however, can reach a point where it genuinely incorporates local agency and responsiveness to local needs remains unclear. Certainly in Somalia, doing so would raise hard questions about who is asked, and who should be listened to, especially among the tense political and clan-based rivalries present in the country. Moreover, we should not be naive about the sorts of implications that translating this transactional model to the real world might be. In both Sandstrom and Lehr’s contributions to this volume, we can see illustrations of how powerful, but far from benign, actors in Somalia have been able to make use of their positions to manipulate international actors and structures to their advantage, and to the wider detriment of Somali society; in Hansen’s we see how well-connected Somali actors in advantageous situations have been able to exert influence on major regional actions undertaken by entire states. In Kibble and Walls chapter, on the other hand, we do, after all, see how local actors may make more constructive use of an ability to engage proactively and realistically with imperfect, and not necessarily wholly impartial, but potentially useful outside parties.

The overall point, however, is that by breaking down dichotomies between what is global and what is local, between what is internal and what is external, between parties to the conflict and parties attempting to resolve it, by ceasing to imagine hypothetical parties with a purely disinterested and technocratic approach to conflict resolution, and instead thinking about how brokering processes between all parties can best function, it may be possible to discern—albeit dimly—how a better future for Somalia might come about. For example, a constituency which would appear to have enormous potential to broker between the interests of actors within Somalia itself and the global actors which (for whatever reason) impinge upon them, is the Somalia diaspora. Here again, as Kibble and Walls note, we have a category which seems to disturb conventional narratives about internality and externality and provide a way to provide for local agency in peacebuilding.

Determining the sources of agency—indeed, deciding who gets to make decisions for Somalia—is always challenging. On the one hand, we might draw attention to the largely powerless entities which have enjoyed official recognition as the government of Somalia: the TNG and the TFG. As already noted, these were both created through international negotiations aimed at creating a representative government rather than as a more organic extension of a peace process. Against this, the easy comparison seems to be the highly

successful “native” project of Somaliland. But Somaliland is hardly a pure example of a “local” initiative. Financially, it has been kept afloat in large measure by a steady flow of remittances from the diaspora community, and major roles in its government continue to be held by diaspora Somalis and foreign educated technocrats not much different from those who held office in the TFG.

Another comparison is also apt here: that of Al Shabaab. Here, yet again, we have a “grassroots” movement—an aspirant government—which is also anything but purely local. It is ideologically rooted in a global vision, it attracts global assistance, and it, too, makes substantial use of diaspora support. And it, too, is successful in some ways: it has, at various times, controlled significant amounts of Somali territory, defeating the conventional militaries of neighboring countries in the process. But while—as Peter Henne has argued persuasively—aligning itself with the global salafist jihad movement may be a good short-term strategy for mobilizing enthusiastic support, it seems likely that it will ultimately jeopardize the group’s future. Because as long as it aligns itself thus, it will always provide—even in the most cynical analysis—a discursive opportunity for other countries to intervene on Somalia’s soil.

Kibble and Walls detail how there are highly developed conflict resolution mechanisms within Somali culture that could be used as a basis for peacebuilding. The vast international peace conferences that take actors outside of Somalia work in direct contradiction with the indigenous process and as a result the conclusions reached are not seen as legitimate. We argue instead that international agencies and NGOs working within Somalia recognize that small-scale interventions, building on and providing support for local initiatives are much more likely to be successful than larger scale international peace conferences. In this way, we would hope that the traditional peacebuilding mechanisms, which create peace at a local level and slowly address wider issues, would resolve the underlying issues of conflict and provide a sturdy basis for national peacebuilding. This would obviously be a long-term process and would require a long-term and patient commitment from the international actor(s) involved in the process. Thus not all international actors currently involved in Somalia would be suitable to undertake this role. States, particularly democratic states whose policies can change with each election, may be better suited to providing emergency aid but may not be seen as an entirely reliable partner for this type of endeavor. Smaller NGOs are also likely to be seen as unreliable as their funding streams are more likely to be contingent on particular funders. Established and well-funded NGOs may fill the role of facilitator though.

As Thakur observes in this volume, and despite the far from glorious record which Seaman has ably chronicled, the obvious entity under whose

aegis such initiatives might be developed is still the United Nations. As an organization it has a reliable and significant funding stream, huge experience in peacebuilding, and should be able to make long-term commitments to projects such as this. However, the United Nations also has a reputation for being very inflexible in its approach and the danger would be that the United Nations would move from being a facilitator toward co-opting the conflict resolution process, which would remove both Somali ownership of the process, and the flexibility that could be key to successfully resolve the conflict.

In envisaging what a modestly enduring state of comparative peace might look like in Somalia as a whole, it seems important both to recognize the enormously heartening evidence of peacebuilding within areas of Somalia. Somaliland and, in a more problematic and limited sense, Puntland have a good prognosis not just because they enjoy legitimacy and, at least to some extent, serve the needs of those within their territory, but also because they are interested in building goodwill at the international level as well: expending precious resources (which could be spent elsewhere) on trying to capture pirates, patiently building diplomatic networks and generally trying to fit into what is expected of a sovereign actor. The UN Peacebuilding Commission is already working on this principle of incorporating local partners and might be able to play a catalytic role in peacebuilding in this case, if allowed to become involved. It could be a missed opportunity for real peace in Somalia if politics did not allow this to happen.

Conclusion

Although the details in the chapters of this book are details about Somalia, this book in many ways is about much more than Somalia. “New wars,” the “war on terror,” piracy, and the impact of the globalized communications are themes that run through this book and, as has been argued, it seems as though Somalia itself has been lost, and replaced with a void that countries and organizations have used to test the latest theories in peacebuilding and the current realities of power distribution within the international system. This book aims to highlight how Somalia has been used in this way and the consequences that this has had on the conflict itself and, more importantly, the people of Somalia. Only by acknowledging this reality can we get back to focusing on the concrete issues that need to be addressed in order to bring peace in Somalia. We hope that this book will help to turn the focus back to the realities of a country that has already seemed far too much suffering, and can bring some illumination to a conflict that is often seen as inexplicable.

Notes

- 1 We would like to thank Michael Boyle for his comments on an earlier draft of this chapter. All errors of course remain our own.
- 2 Kissinger, as quoted in Robert O. Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power & Interdependence 4th Edition* (Upper Saddle River: Pearson, 2011).
- 3 See, for example, James J Forrest, "Al Qaeda's Influence in Sub-Saharan Africa: Myths, Realities and Ways Forwards," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 5:3-4 (2011).
- 4 Osama bin Laden, "Fight on Champions of Somalia," *Al Sahab Media*, March 2009, available online from <http://www.archive.org/details/Fight-On-Champions-Of-Somalia> (last accessed 3/03/2013).
- 5 Rafaello Pantucci, "Al-Shabaab: The American connection," *The Guardian*, 13/03/2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/jun/13/somalia-shabaab-terrorism> (last accessed 3/03/2011).
- 6 Nick Wadhams, "The Danish Cartoonist Attack: Sign of a Wider Plot?," *Time*, 05/01/2010, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1951710,00.html>.
- 7 Robert H. Jackson, "Negative Sovereignty in sub-Saharan Africa," *Review of International Studies* 12:4 (1986).
- 8 Brian J. Hesse, "Lessons in Successful Somali Governance," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 8:1 (2010), 71–83.
- 9 Omar M. Abdiand Salah Fatah, "Puntland Oil and Mining Deal: The Offspring of an Affair Between Greed and Incompetence, parts 1 and 2, WardheerNews.com, 28/4/2006, http://www.wardheernews.com/Articles_06/April/28_Puntland.Mineral.Deal_O.A.&S.Fatah.html.
- 10 Paolo Tripodi, *The Colonial Legacy in Somalia: Rome and Mogadishu: for Colonial Administration to Operation Restore Hope* (New York: St Martin's Press 1999).
- 11 Severine Auterresse, *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010).
- 12 International Crisis Group, *Can the Somali Crisis be Contained? Africa Report No. 116–10 August 2006*; accessed on 24/09/2011 at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia.aspx>.
- 13 Auterresse, *The Trouble with the Congo*, 243.
- 14 Warah, Rasna, "New Report Reveals Somalia's Missing Millions," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 31 July 2012.
- 15 World Bank: A Decade of Aid to the Health Sector in Somalia, 2000–09, 11.
- 16 Auterresse, *The Trouble with the Congo*, 243.
- 17 International Crisis Group *can the Somali crisis be contained?*
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Auterresse, *The Trouble with the Congo*, 245.
- 21 see, for example, Adam Barbolet, Rachel Goldwyn, Hesta Groenewald and Andrew Sherriff, "The Utility and Dilemmas of Conflict Sensitivity" (Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2005).
- 22 Auterresse, *The Trouble with the Congo*.
- 23 UN Peacebuilding Commission, (2012) accessed on 2 February 2013 at: <http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/>.

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